Lincoln Lore

July, 1977 | Bulletin of the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum. Mark E. Neely, Jr., Editor. Published each month by the Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801. | Number 1673

Lincoln Autographed *Debates:* Samuel Long Copy

This article is the fourth in *Lincoln Lore's* series on the copies of the *Political Debates Between Hon. Abraham Lincoln and Hon. Stephen A. Douglas in the Celebrated Campaign of 1858, in Illinois* inscribed by Abraham Lincoln to his friends and political associates. Lincoln is said to have received one hundred copies of this book to give away. Harry E. Pratt's "Lincoln Autographed Debates" (*Manuscripts*, VI [Summer, 1954], 194-201) listed eighteen copies known to exist at that time. Now, Mrs. Donald Trescott, Special Collections Librarian at the Brown University Library, has written to tell us about the copy in their Lincoln collection, and it seems to be the nineteenth known copy, for it was not listed by Harry Pratt in 1954. Lincoln students and bibliophiles owe a debt to Mrs. Trescott for taking the time and trouble to describe Brown University's copy.

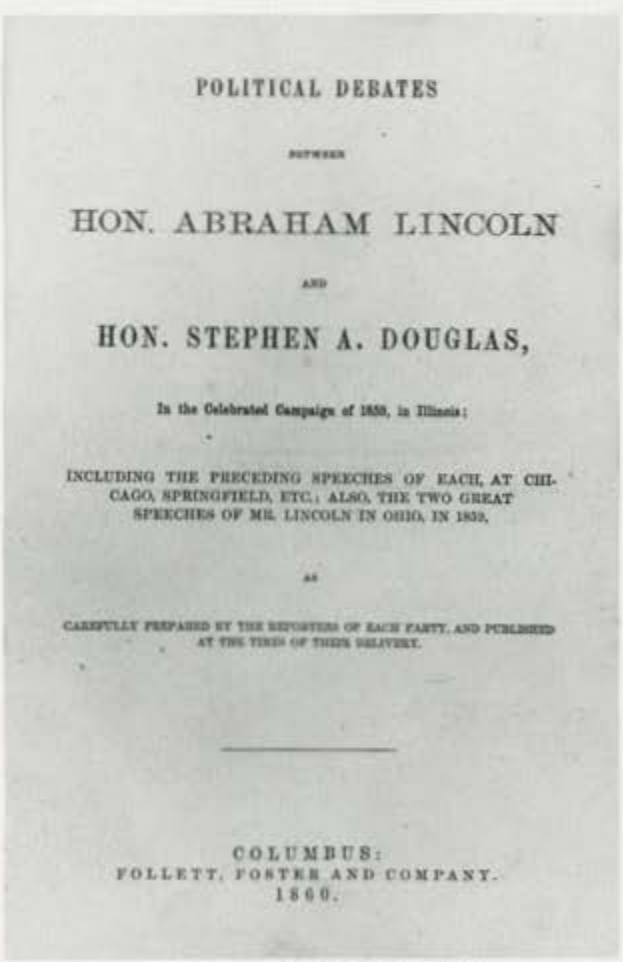
The copy is inscribed "To Dr. Samuel Long/with respects of/A. Lincoln." The copy came to the fine (but ironically named) McLellan Lincoln Collection at Brown through the good offices of Harry Pratt. He obtained the copy from Mrs. J.R. Kennedy. The book had previously belonged to her late husband's grandfather. Dr. Samuel Long, to whom Lincoln wrote his inscription, had one son who died young and one daughter, Annie, who married Samuel Porter Kennedy. Presumably, he was J.R. Kennedy's grandfather.

Marion Pratt, who was a thorough and knowledgeable Lincoln researcher, apparently furnished Brown with a list of the references to Dr. Samuel Long from the *Illinois State Journal*. These provide us with the rough outlines of the doctor's career. He was listed as a physician in Lincoln's home town, Springfield, by 1851. A year later he became the city's corporation physician and the city physician. In 1853, he married Elizabeth Almira Collins; they lost their son in 1856.

We know that Dr. Long was not the Lincolns' physician in Springfield; his connection with Lincoln was apparently political. In 1858, he was a delegate to the Illinois State Republican Convention, where he may have heard Lincoln deliver his famous "House Divided" Speech. As a member of the reception committee of that Convention, he doubtless congratulated the party's nominee for the Senate seat held by Stephen A. Douglas. Later that summer, Dr. Long was a successful candidate for the post of alderman in Springfield. At this point, his career began to take a turn for the worse. In May of 1859, he resigned as trustee of the Institution for the Deaf and Dumb at Jacksonville, Illinois. In August, he resigned his aldermanic seat and went to Texas. In September, he returned from Texas. The last reference to Dr. Long noted that he was serving as a United States Grand Juror in June of 1860. At that point, the references to Dr. Long supplied by Mrs. Pratt end.

Happily, a few other fugitive sources tell the rest of the tale. Milton H. Shutes in *Lincoln and the Doctors* (New York: Pioneer Press, 1933) claimed that "Dr. Samuel Long . . . abandoned the practice of medicine when President Lincoln appointed him consul at Havana." But the post at Havana was much too important to entrust to a provincial physician from the President's home town. A center for conflicts over blockade-running, Havana would play an important part in the background of the famous *Trent* affair, the diplomatic crisis which nearly brought intervention from England on the side of the Confederacy. The consul at Havana was Robert Wilson Shufeldt, a New Yorker with sixteen years' experience in the navy, who had spent the six years immediately before the war as a merchant captain sailing from New Orleans to Havana. True, he was not a career diplomat, and the political influence of his friend, Connecticut Senator Truman Smith, on fellow Nutmegger and Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles was the critical connection in gaining Shufeldt the consulship. Nevertheless, he was familiar with dealing with the Spanish colonial empire, he spoke Spanish fluently, and he had been a frequent visitor to Havana. Dr. Long seems to have had none of these qualifications.

Ensley Moore's article on "The Collins Family and Connections" in the *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* for April, 1919, noted that Dr. Long served as consul to Lahaina in the Sandwich Islands, and a



POLITICAL DEBATES

BETWEEN

HON. ABRAHAM LINCOLN

AND

HON. STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS,

In the Celebrated Campaign of 1858, in Illinois;

INCLUDING THE PRECEDING SPEECHES OF EACH, AT CHICAGO, SPRINGFIELD, ETC.; ALSO, THE TWO GREAT SPEECHES OF MR. LINCOLN IN OHIO, IN 1859,

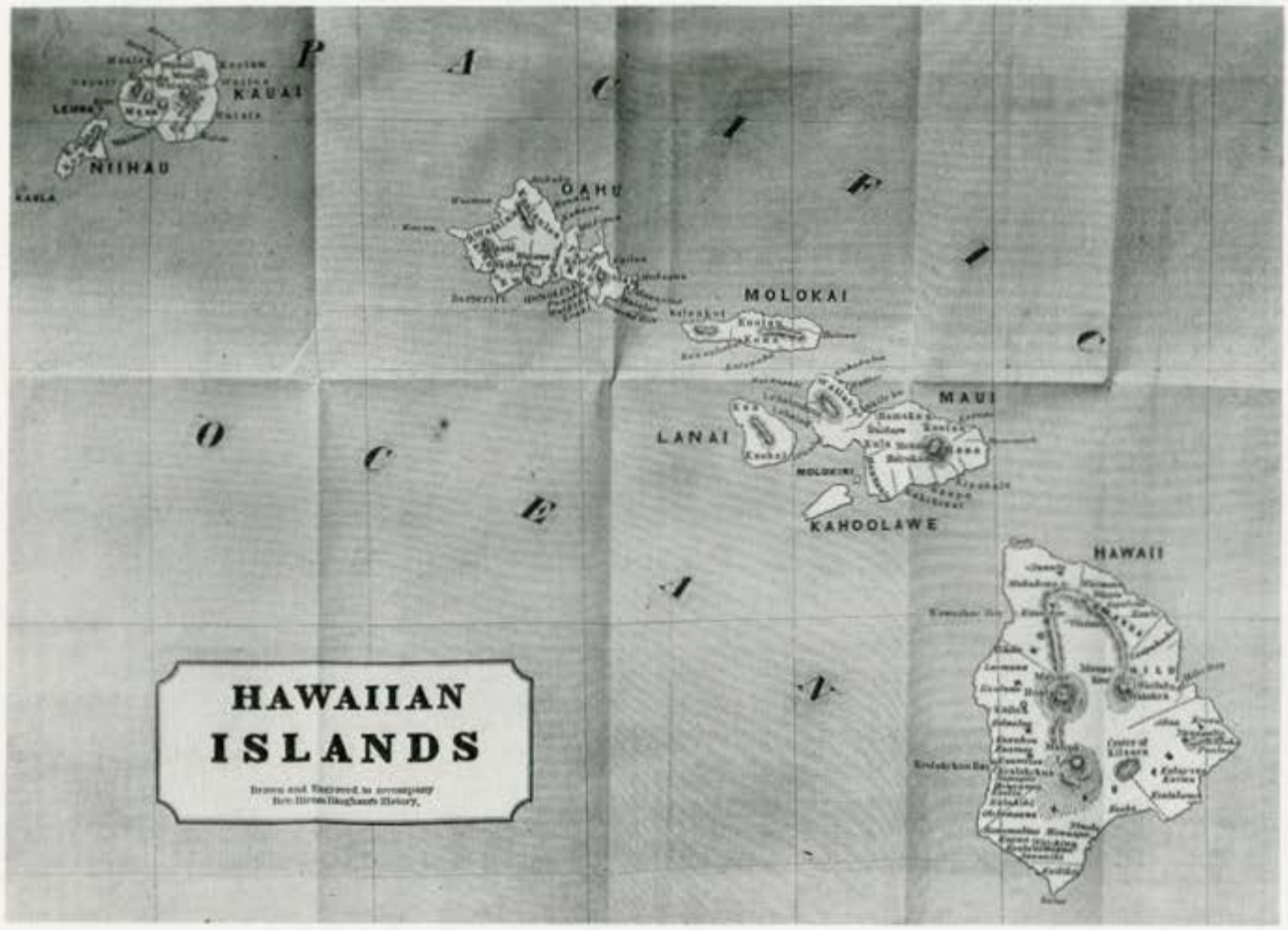
AS

CAREFULLY PREPARED BY THE REPORTERS OF EACH PARTY, AND PUBLISHED AT THE TIMES OF THEIR DELIVERY.

COLUMBUS:
FOLLETT, FOSTER AND COMPANY.
1860.

From the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 1. Title page of the published version of the Lincoln-Douglas Debates. Lincoln customarily signed the presentation copies on the flyleaf.



From the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 2. Map of the Hawaiian Islands from Hiram Bingham's *Residence of Twenty-one Years in the Sandwich Islands* (Canandaigua, New York: H.D. Goodwin, 1855).

letter in the Library of Congress's Robert Todd Lincoln Collection confirms this and explains much about Dr. Long's later life. The Sandwich Islands, incidentally, were what we call the Hawaiian Islands today. Lahaina is on the island of Maui.

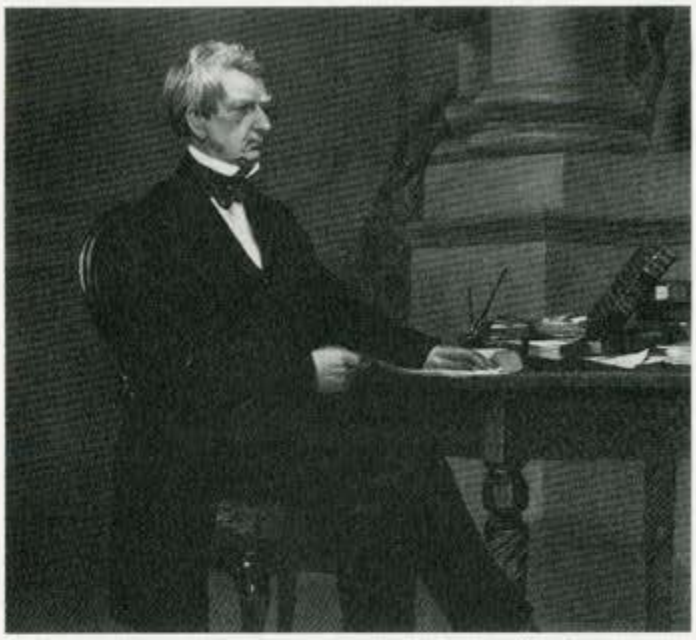
On July 15, 1861, Dr. Long wrote Secretary of State William H. Seward a long and unhappy letter from the Sandwich Islands. Long asked Seward to give his letter to President Lincoln and wrote Lincoln on the same date to make sure that he knew he was supposed to receive the letter after Seward read it. Dr. Long reminded Seward that he had accepted the post at Lahaina only because of Seward's "persuasion and influence." Lincoln, Long claimed, had promised him that he would be consul at Honolulu. "I supposed at the time," he added, "that you meant to do me a kindness, and so at your instance was persuaded to relinquish the Honolulu Consulate, for the one I now hold."

Hinting perhaps that he did not trust Seward's motives as well, Dr. Long wrote, "Mr. Lincoln, I know meant me well." Nevertheless, Long would never have accepted Seward's offer had he known the position he would occupy immediately after his arrival. Here was his plight:

> On the 28th day of March I received my final instructions and passport, and left Washington for my post of duty. — I had heard of the investigations, that had taken place in Honolulu, and at this place, and supposed, when I accepted the position I occupy, that the matter was all settled satisfactorily, and that I would be permitted to come out and occupy in peace, as long as I discharged my trust faithfully and honestly, this Consulate. — But not so — I had been here a few days only over a month, when Dr. H.H. Baseley presents himself to me, as a "Special Consular Commissioner," clothed with most extraordinary powers, to alter, modify, and change any and everything pertaining to this Consulate. — He has power to break up this Consulate effectually, and to transfer its Hospital to Honolulu. — He has power to take from my hands all patronage, so that I shall be unable to retain with me, as a friend and companion, the gentleman who came with me from home, to act as purveyor and Physician of my Consulate, and in short, the result of the investigations of the Special Commissioner will be, that he will recommend the abolition of this Consulate and of the one at Hilo, and the concentration of all governmental authority in these Islands, in the person of a Consul General to reside at Honolulu, with agencies here, and at Hilo. —

Dr. Long agreed that the reorganization would save the government money, but he was miffed to "find that Dr. Baseley's latest instructions bear date of March 30, 1861, only *two* days later than mine — It does appear to me that when such a sweeping reform was intended in this Consulate, that it would have been but justice to myself, to give me notice at that time of any such intention, and then if I should conclude to come to Lahaina, it would be at my own risk." Dr. Long wanted "to give no offence in this writing," but Seward had "cut me up, root and branch." "I do not wish to remain here," he said flatly, "when this Consulate is bereft of all patronage, and made an appendage of the Honolulu Consulate." Long's request was simple: he wanted the Honolulu Consulate, the object of his "first wishes."

Dr. Long put heavy pressure on Secretary of State Seward. He reminded the Secretary that Lincoln "knows me well, and has known me long." He pointed out that the three thousand dollars he spent from his own funds to reach the Sandwich Islands and establish housekeeping had ruined him "pecuniarily." Moreover, the healthfulness of the climate in Honolulu

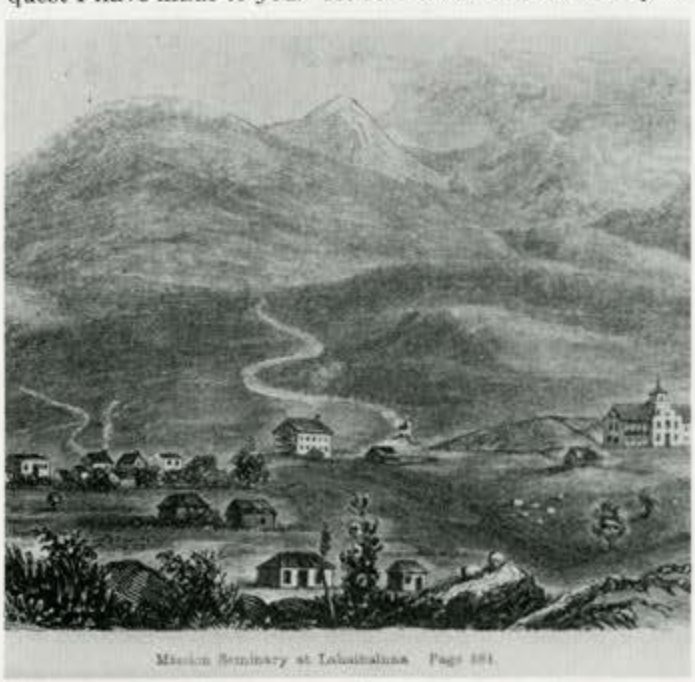


From the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 3. Secretary of the State William H. Seward.

was fully as good as that on the rest of the Sandwich Islands, and it was apparently for the sake of his health that he had sought a tropical post. Doubtless, Dr. Long's concern about his health explains much. Failing health probably led him to resign his various positions of public responsibility in Illinois in 1859. Climate probably led him to Texas, and politics probably led him right back to Illinois, for Texas in 1860 was no place for a staunch Republican like Dr. Long. "Take into consideration," Long concluded, "the distance I am from my home, my pecuniary situation, and the condition of my family which is with me, and remember that you alone, are the cause of my being thus situated, and if you have any 'bowels of mercy' about you, I shall receive a favorable answer to my request."

Dr. Long's note to Lincoln was much shorter and considerably less intemperate in tone. He begged "that if I have any hold in your esteem, or place in your kind feelings, as you long ago, unsolicited, assured me I had, you will grant the request I have made to you." He reminded Lincoln of his poor



From the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 4. Detail of a view of Lahainaluna from Hiram Bingham's memoir.

health: "I find the climate of these Islands very beneficial to my health, and if I can remain here several years, I have every assurance to believe that I will get well." He ended his plea with "all the earnestness of a drowning man, who catches at every straw floating by."

We do not know the resolution of Dr. Long's difficulties, but it is not hard to guess that his plea fell on deaf ears. In the first place, the arguments he used for the move to Honolulu were also circumstances which indicated that he would have little choice in the matter should Seward stick by his choice for Honolulu. Financially pressed and needing a tropical climate, Dr. Long was in no position to quit and go home if he were not offered the Honolulu post. In the second place, Dr. Long was up against another solid Lincoln friend in Hawaii.

The Honolulu post was held by Thomas J. Dryer, a journalist from Oregon. When he swung the Portland *Oregonian* into the Republican camp in 1859, he gained enough influence in the party to be made a Lincoln elector in 1860. Since he actually carried the tally of Oregon's vote to Washington for the official count, he was present in Washington to seek an office just at the time Lincoln was forming his new government. He took the Hawaii post when it was offered, but for a time the Senate blocked his confirmation because of his rumored fondness for strong drink. It took the efforts of Oregon Senator Edward D. Baker to get Dryer's confirmation through the Senate, and Baker had to pledge his "sacred honor" that the charge that Dryer was intemperate was untrue. The Senate then confirmed him.

Dr. Long was doubtless an old friend of Abraham Lincoln's, but Lincoln had few friends of longer standing than Edward D. Baker. Mainstays of the Whig party in central Illinois back in the 1840s, Lincoln and Baker were close enough associates that Lincoln named his son Eddie after Baker. Baker was Dryer's sponsor for the Hawaii job, and it is doubtful that President Lincoln would do anything to upset his administration of the Hawaiian consulate even for the sake of another friend from Illinois. In fact, Lincoln passed Long over for another Oregonian in 1863, when the Honolulu post was upgraded to the level of minister resident. Lincoln appointed Dr. James McBride, an Oregon physician, farmer, and Republican stalwart.

Brown University's historic presentation copy of the *Debates* is an artifact which suggests a fascinating story of friendship and politics, a story which stretches all the way from central Illinois to the islands of the Pacific. Those who are not collectors or who are not browsers in museums and rare book libraries often are puzzled at others' interest in fly-specked and damp-stained copies of books with scribbled signatures in them. Most often, of course, it is not the objects themselves but the tales of far-flung adventures suggested by the objects which cause the fascination. The appeal of such stories, when they are known, proves hard to resist.

Olivia Coolidge's Lincoln Biography for Young Adults

If you have been searching recently for good high school graduation presents, or if you have a teenager around the house idled by summer unemployment, Olivia Coolidge has provided one solution to your problems. She has finished a two-volume biography of Abraham Lincoln, which, though written for young readers, will not insult their intelligence or show them American history through rose-colored glasses. The first volume, called *The Apprenticeship of Abraham Lincoln,* was published by Charles Scribner's Sons in 1974. The second volume, entitled *The Statesmanship of Abraham Lincoln,* was published by Scribner's last year. Each volume is about 230 pages in length, attractively printed, and unburdened by scholarly apparatus like footnotes which can scare a younger reader away.

Olivia Coolidge is the author of more than twenty-five books for young readers, many of them biographies. Born in London, she graduated from Oxford University, taught English in Boston's Winsor School, and became a professional writer. Classical civilization has been one of her major interests since her original training at Oxford, but she has also written books on Winston Churchill, Thomas Paine, Edith Wharton, Eugene O'Neill, and Gandhi. She considered

writing a biography of Lincoln the most difficult task she had ever undertaken.

The Apprenticeship of Abraham Lincoln is the first "juvenile" book I have ever seen reviewed in scholarly journals aimed at history professors. Mrs. Coolidge knew that hers was "only a young adult work, which Lincoln scholars will, at best, pat on the head as they pass by it." She must surely be gratified by the reception her book got, for it received more than a pat on the head. Yet even the very enthusiastic reviews she received generally ignored the most important point. When an editor at Scribner's suggested that Mrs. Coolidge write a book on Lincoln, she told her that no young adult book on Lincoln existed. Mrs. Coolidge laughed, but further checking revealed to her amazement that it was true.

I originally contemplated using this article first to let readers know that these were good Lincoln books and second to urge some caution in their use since any brief Lincoln biography must of necessity do some violence to the Lincoln story. Now I have decided against that. Whatever the limitations of her biography, Mrs. Coolidge's book fills too big a void and fills it too ably to indulge in any nit-picking and fault-finding. I was particularly encouraged to take a more booster-ish approach when I read two short articles by Mrs. Coolidge describing the way she went about writing her biography. These appeared in *The Horn Book Magazine* (which reviews children's literature) and the *Wilson Library Bulletin*, two periodicals to which one is not ordinarily drawn in search of information about Abraham Lincoln.

What Mrs. Coolidge said was most reassuring. Discussing "My Struggle with Facts" in the *Wilson Library Bulletin* of October, 1974, she noted the sort of minor frustration which any careful author must resolve at some considerable effort without receiving any reward from the reader. She noted that Thomas Lincoln, Abraham's father, had lived in a cabin in Illinois at a place called Goose Nest Prairie. She first encountered the name in Albert Beveridge's substantial *Abraham Lincoln, 1809-1858*. Later she read Charles Coleman's *Abraham Lincoln and Coles County, Illinois* and noted, among other things, that Professor Coleman spelled the name "Goosenest." She then checked an 1879 history of Coles County and found that its author hyphenated the name ("Goose-nest"). Beveridge was one of the greatest of Lincoln biographers, Professor Coleman lived and taught near Coles County and is the recognized modern authority on Lincoln's family in Illinois, and certainly an historian of the very county cannot be taken too lightly! Yet the spelling must be resolved before the book goes to press. The resolution will probably offend some authority or other, and at best it will go by unnoticed by the reading public. Her careful attention to such matters is bound to please any reader, but what was especially reassuring about this anecdote was the evidence it gave of her acquaintance with the very best in the published literature on Lincoln. Beveridge's biography is still the best single book on Lincoln's life before the Presidency, and Charles Coleman's book is the best book on Lincoln family after young Abraham had left it to carve out his now famous career. This is very reassuring indeed, and I think that Mrs. Coolidge was not trying to drop names and cultivate an image as a careful and discriminating researcher. The audience she was writing for in a library bulletin was not one likely to contain a lot of people deeply familiar with the relative merits of the staggering corpus of works on Abraham Lincoln. Quite innocently, she gave her readers *double* reassurance.

"Writing about Abraham Lincoln," which appeared in *The Horn Book Magazine* in February, 1975, described the purpose of Mrs. Coolidge's biography in clear and sensible terms. She wrote, she said, "for anyone between the ages of fifteen and ninety who may not have time to read long books, may not read fluently enough to get through them, or is interested in the subject only in passing. Such people are not necessarily unintelligent. Indeed, the more intelligent they are, the more I am pleased. I want to give them adult ideas and conceptions, and I hope they like to think as well as to be told." It requires skill "to produce a book which explains itself as it goes along, keeps its eye firmly on Lincoln, and yet develops the national issues important in his life. If you say Lincoln is too big a subject to write about in a couple of two-hundred-page books, I admit you are probably correct, but I wanted to try."

She has not altogether succeeded, and the second volume, which she anticipated would be more difficult, pleases me a little less than the first. There is something about the Lincoln Presidency which makes an author want to scatter his shots. The Civil War acts as a great centrifugal force in Lincoln biographies, hurling the biographer out to the farthest edges of the nation until somehow the President himself is lost sight of in a maze of military hierarchy and campaigns on several fronts. It seems almost irresistible, and it was this centrifugal force which caused the principal weakness in Benjamin Thomas's otherwise fine biography of Lincoln. In the war years, Lincoln sometimes appears to get lost in the shuffle. Olivia Coolidge's *Statesmanship of Abraham Lincoln* suffers a bit from a rather uncertain grasp of constitutional issues. The suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus*, for example, is not the same thing as the imposition of martial law, though she more than once implies that it is.

Mrs. Coolidge had a clear-headed awareness of difficulties. In an especially interesting passage in *The Horn Book* piece, she said:

> But still the mass of material breaks my bounds and makes it difficult to keep from overemphasizing my views for brevity's sake. In writing other books, I have had practice in suggesting — here by a word and there by a phrase — some contrary opinion; but I have never had greater trouble in compressing without becoming arbitrary.

She has great appreciation not only for the bulk but also for the complexity of scholarship on Lincoln, and in general she picks and chooses with a careful and discerning eye.

Mrs. Coolidge used no manuscript materials, of course, and she very properly does not see it as the role of the writer for young adults to introduce new materials or interpretations. "A young adult book," she argues, "essentially provides background which may serve as a magnet to attract and hold other knowledge." Nevertheless, she read widely in secondary books, read memoirs of people who knew Lincoln, and used *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* judiciously. Her fine works on Lincoln should serve well to attract and hold a generation who, before she tackled this most difficult task of her literary life, had been abandoned to the void between illustrated children's books and the tough and sophisticated views of Lincoln one gets in college surveys of American history.

Courtesy Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston

FIGURE 5. Olivia Coolidge.