

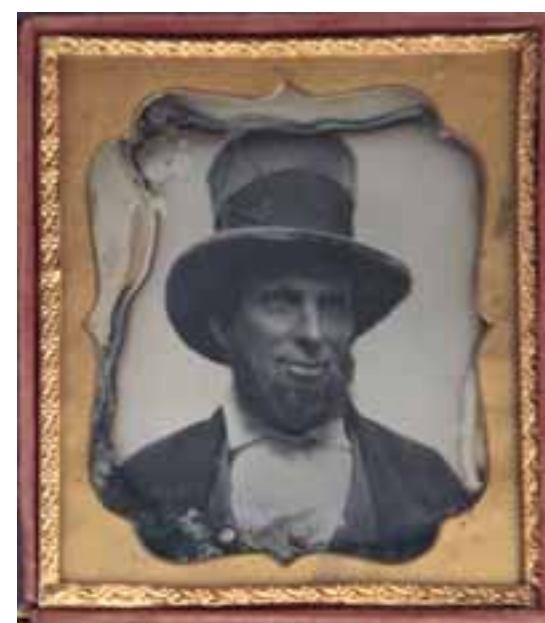
# THE MYSTERY OF THE LOST DAGUERRETYPE



*With an Essay on  
Abraham Lincoln Portraits  
in Daguerreotype*

SENIGALLIA

• MMXXV •





# THE MYSTERY OF THE LOST DAGUERRETYPE

## TRACING LINCOLN'S IMAGE IN 1861

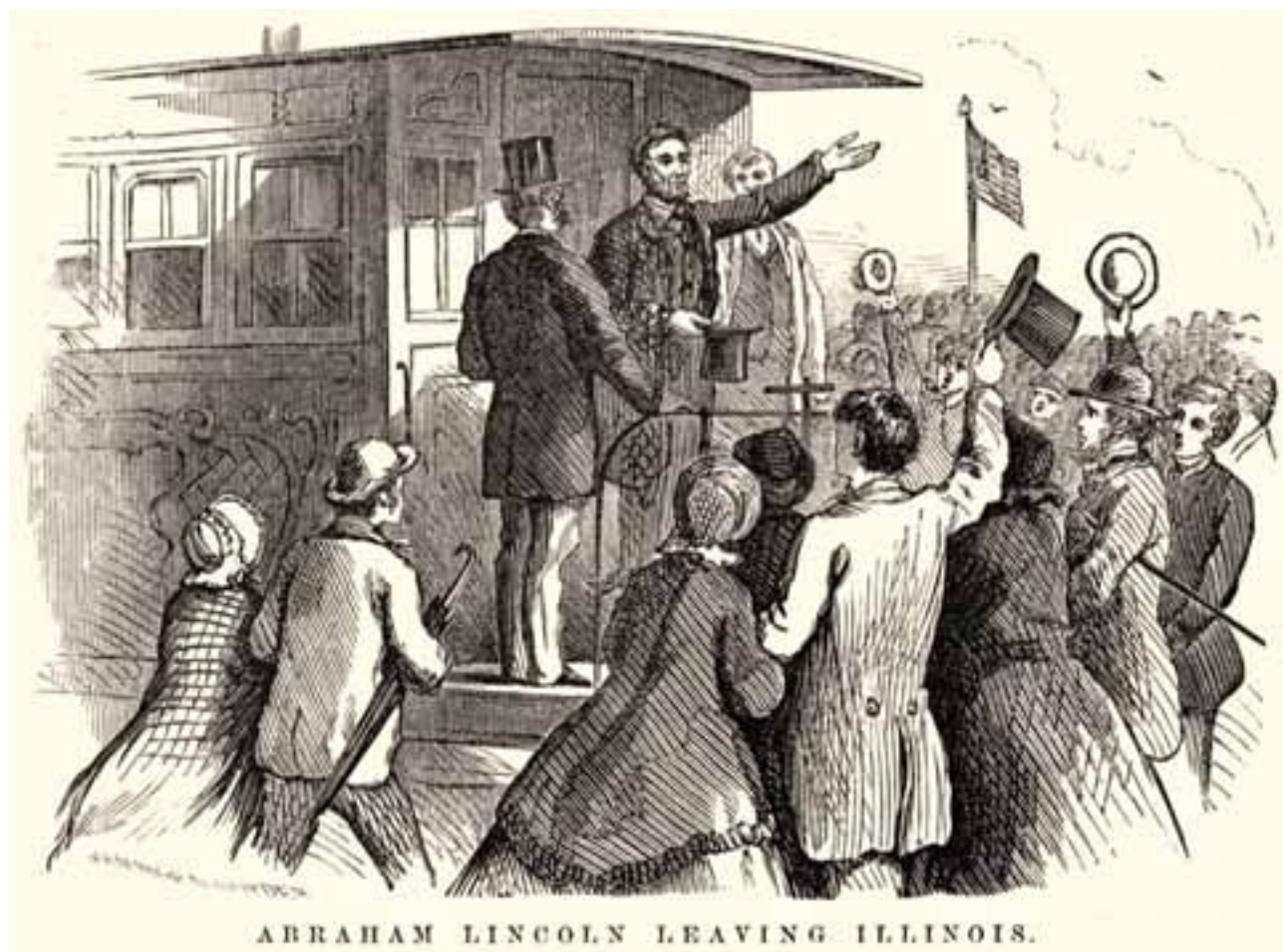
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## NOTE TO THE READER

An anonymous image surfaced during a bustling New York photo fair, coinciding with the AIPAD New York Photo Week in a recent year. The portrait depicts a man bearing a striking resemblance to President Lincoln. While it's possible that this individual could be a Lincoln look-alike, it's crucial to understand the historical context of this image's creation.

The portrait is a daguerreotype, a photographic process that by 1860-1861 had abruptly and almost completely vanished from use. This rapid disappearance coincided with the period when Lincoln was contemplating growing his iconic whiskers after his election as President.

The daguerreotype, invented in 1839, was the first commercially successful photographic method. However, its decline in the late 1850s was swift and absolute. By 1860, the daguerreotype had been almost entirely supplanted by newer, more efficient techniques such as the ambrotype and the collodion wet plate process. The transition was so complete that by 1861, only a handful of studios in major cities could still produce daguerreotypes, and even these were rare.

All the American men who wished to resemble the President started to grow their beard only after the daguerreotype process vanishes. Then, if the model is not a Lincoln look-alike, if Lincoln has no twin, what can we consider ?

Therefore, if we eliminate all those who wished to resemble him, what is the probability of a natural doppelganger existing for such an extraordinary figure ? And without any comment at any moment ? It was logical to search for documented traces of a daguerreotype at the frontier moment when Abraham Lincoln began growing his beard.

The intriguing possibility arises: could this anonymous portrait be the long-lost daguerreian image of President-elect Abraham Lincoln? Lincoln biographers and iconographers have long mentioned the existence of this elusive portrait, reportedly taken during a stop on Lincoln's inaugural journey in Clyde, NY, in February 1861.

This information raises the tantalizing prospect that the anonymous portrait may, indeed, be the missing daguerreian likeness of President Lincoln. However, the definitive confirmation of this theory hinges on further evidence and verification.

The essay provides readers with information and evidence to consider, allowing them to form their own opinions or convictions about the portrait's identity. Ultimately, it is up to the reader to determine whether they believe this portrait could be the elusive daguerreian portrait of President Lincoln, based on the presented information.

We encourage everyone to form their own opinions, as it is equally relevant to validate the cluster of clues, as it is to explore any evidence that might challenge this intriguing hypothesis.

*"I shall not easily forget the first time I ever saw Abraham Lincoln..."*

*"From the top of an omnibus (driven up on side, close by, and blocked by the curbstone and the crowds) I had, I say, a capital view of it all and especially of Mr. Lincoln: his looks and gait; his perfect composure and coolness; his unusual and uncouth height; his dress of complete black, stovepipe hat pushed back on his head; dark-brown complexion; seamed and wrinkled yet canny-looking face; black, bush head of hair; disproportionately long neck; and his hands held behind, as he stood observing the people."*

( Walt Whitman, New York City, 19 February 1861).



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COLOPHON



• Subject Daguerreotype seen outside the protective glass at a low angle with reflections of light rays (detail)

• I •

# AN INQUIRY INTO METHOD

*Navigating Time and Space*

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# NAVIGATING TIME AND SPACE

Digital technologies and artificial intelligence have transformed methods for identifying portraits, art, and ancient documents. While they offer new opportunities, they also introduce complexities.

Paradoxically, it is challenging to determine whether this process has become easier or more difficult; it is simply different. While we have gained time through access to new resources, we have also lost time due to increased doubt and skepticism. As we venture into new realms of knowledge, we often find that our shared vocabulary is shrinking. We share less common ground with our contemporaries, and specialized fields like historical photography have developed technical languages that can be unintelligible even to related disciplines such as art history.

The more people adhere to a particular historical formulation, the more difficult it becomes to question or even discuss how it became established.

Abraham Lincoln is the human being whose photographic image has been collected for the longest time. He was the first subject of antique photograph collections, with the oldest catalog dating back to 1903 <sup>1</sup>, decades before photograph collecting became popular. This was about 60 years before pioneers began collecting historical photographs, and 80 years before it became widespread <sup>2</sup>.

Proposing to identify a previously unknown and unpublished daguerreotype of Abraham Lincoln is a formidable challenge. After years of preparation and research, we present our findings not as definitive assertions, but as a proposal for the reader’s consideration. To ensure a balanced approach, we’ve incorporated diverse viewpoints, objections, and questions from various correspondents. The resulting dossier, comprising 17 parts, aims to provide readers with comprehensive information to form their own conclusions.

The first part is this introductory text.

The second part highlights the Herculean—or perhaps we should say Lincolnian—task undertaken by the first iconographers. These intrepid scholars attempted to create a catalog raisonné of Abraham Lincoln’s portraits and related documentation. By 1915, their efforts had already produced a 28-volume work on the subject <sup>3</sup>.

The subsequent section states that iconographers agree on only three daguerreotypes, with only one being an original portrait. We nearly lost the name of its creator entirely. The other two are precious objects intended as a gift, as they were more valuable than paper prints at least one of them created at Lincoln’s request. These are what we call copy daguerreotypes.

In the fourth part, we describe six examples of collectors or researchers who believed they had found a daguerreotype representing Lincoln. Despite failing to convince others, they persisted, sometimes to the detriment of their health. These cases are interesting and valuable, as they prompt us to reflect on the dangers and pitfalls that can arise in reasoning.

The fifth part introduces the object of research by describing the conditions of its discovery. In the sixth part, we explain why everyone was initially convinced that it was simply someone resembling Abraham Lincoln. Herein lies the first unanimity.

The important point is that the daguerreotype process disappeared just as Lincoln began growing his beard. Fortuitously, the most recent iconographer meticulously mentioned the possible existence of Lincoln portraits that have disappeared or not yet been found. Not only does Lloyd Ostendorf mention the existence of a lost portrait, but he also specifies the location and date <sup>4</sup>. Additional research suggests that it is a daguerreotype.

This allows us to address the subsequent parts of this study, parts seven to twelve. Abraham Lincoln was traveling aboard his inaugural train. We sought to gather as much information as possible about this train, which changed in form and composition over the course of the 12-day journey. Our investigation aimed to identify the passengers and determine whether they had made any comments. Journalists were also present, and several described the presence of a photographer at a very precise moment, 8.48 AM <sup>5</sup>. We conducted inquiries in the small village, meeting local historians and collecting both oral traditions and traces that remain vivid in collective memory, as well as written records spanning 160 years <sup>6</sup>. It is a rare occasion to address a case with such incredibly precise spatio-temporal coordinates when starting an investigation.

After compiling these testimonies, we conducted a thorough examination of the daguerreotype itself to search for clues, analyzing various aspects of the image and its physical characteristics, such as the leather case, brass frame, unframed plate, significance of the sixth plate format, and the tarnish.

The fourteenth section focuses on the subject’s attire and surroundings, examining visible shadows and the empty-looking background for additional clues. In part fifteen, we examined the physiognomy of the figure, scrutinizing every detail that might allow us to either support or abandon this modest hypothesis, burdened with such significant responsibility.

All this allows for the proposed reconstruction of the scene (part sixteenth).

<sup>1</sup> Meserve, Frederick Hill, *Lincolniana, Portraits of the Civil War Period*, 1903, see also page 17 of the present report

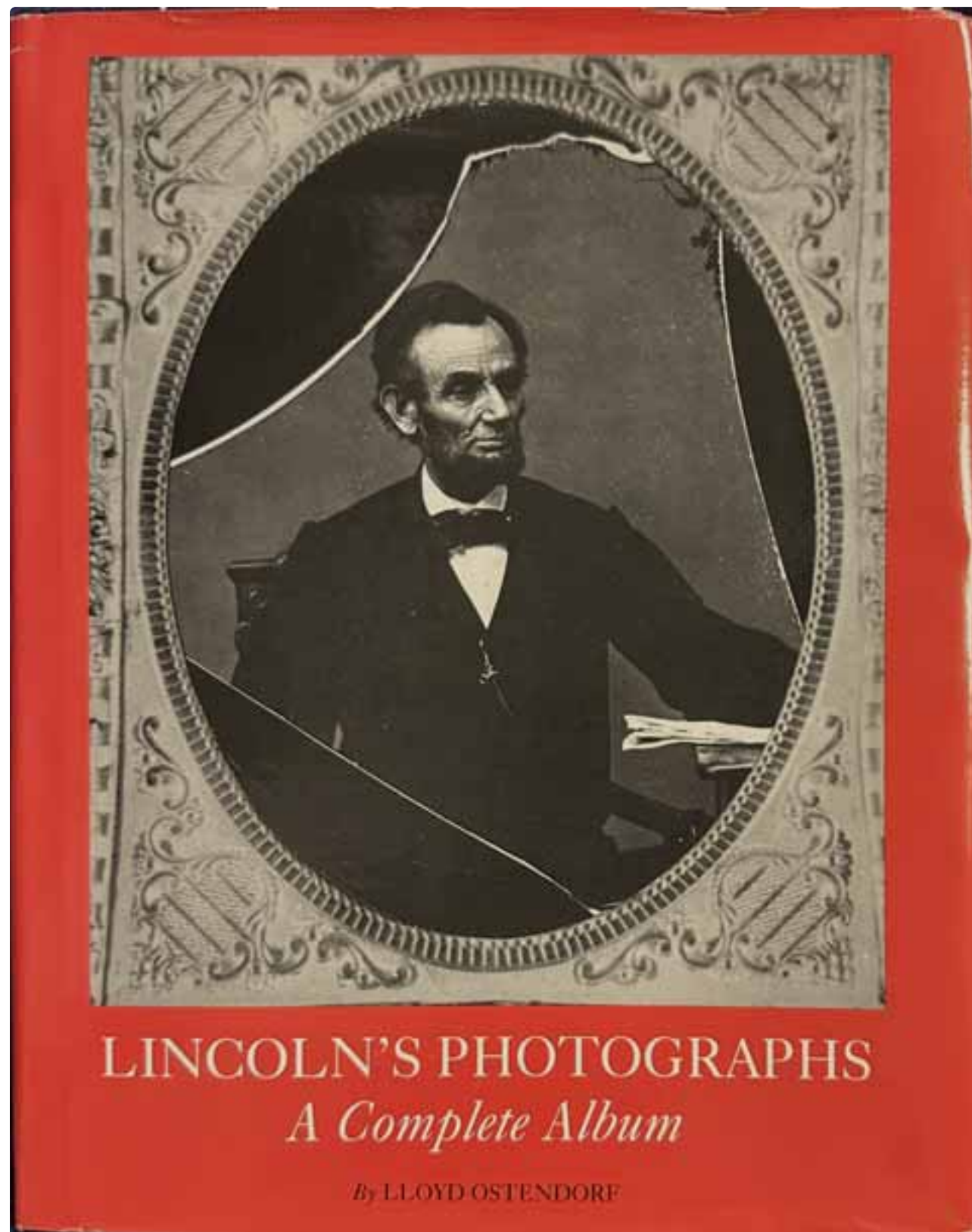
<sup>2</sup> Apraxine, Pierre. *L’Image à venir, Mémoires d’un collectionneur, introduction par Maria Morris Hambourg*. Editions Courtes et Longues, Jean Poderos, 2024

<sup>3</sup> Meserve, Frederick Hill, *Historical portraits and Lincolniana : index of a part of the collection of Americana of F. H. Meserve*, see page 17

<sup>4</sup> Ostendorf, Lloyd and Hamilton, Charles. “*Lincoln in Photographs: An Album of Every Known Pose*.” Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963, page 373

<sup>5</sup> The primary source is a time *card held* in the Library of the Town of Galen Historical Society, reproduced page 67

<sup>6</sup> Morrison, Wayne E. “*Morrison’s History of Clyde, Wayne Co., New York*.” 5<sup>th</sup> edition, 1980



• Lloyd Ostendorf. *A Complete Album*, third and ultimate updated edition, 1998

• II •

## CATALOGING LINCOLN'S PHOTOGRAPHIC PORTRAITS

- *Frederick Hill Meserve, 1903-1912*
- *Winfred Porter Truesdell, 1920-1933*
- *Lloyd Ostendorf, 1963-1998*

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# FREDERICK HILL MESERVE

The quest for a comprehensive Lincoln portrait catalogue with the search for undiscovered photographs of Abraham Lincoln has been an ongoing effort by historians and collectors for over a century. Here is a chronological overview of a key figure in this quest:

Frederick Hill Meserve (1865-1962) was a prominent collector and historian of Civil War era photographs, with a particular focus on Abraham Lincoln. He amassed an extensive collection of original Lincoln photographs until publishing “*The Photographs of Abraham Lincoln*” with historian Carl Sandburg in 1944<sup>1</sup>.

No photographic history has been studied with more patient passion than American president Abraham Lincoln’s portraits. Meserve, the first Lincoln iconographer, was the son of a Civil War soldier who was wounded at the battle of Antietam and kept a diary of his entire time in the war. While illustrating that diary through collecting photography, Meserve became a pioneer and leader for collectors of 19th-century American photography.

In the late 19th century, the war-weary nation lost interest in images from that era. Many glass negatives were thought to be worthless; the emulsion was washed off, and many were used to build greenhouses. Meserve bought the Brady negatives in boxes from a firm called Anthony & Co in Hoboken, circa 1901.

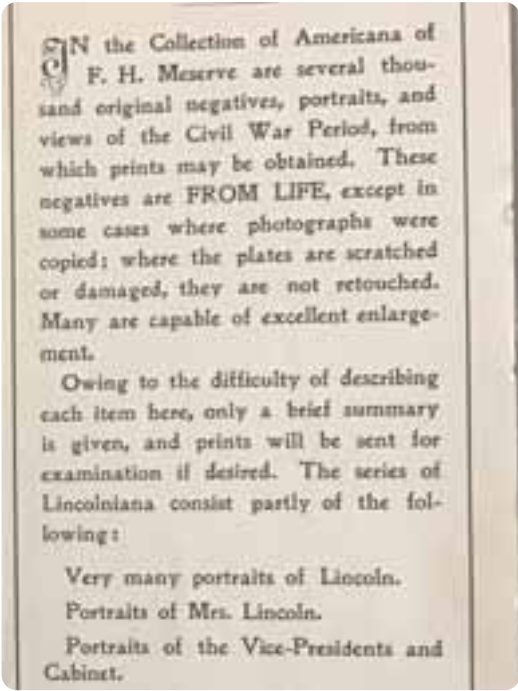
Meserve’s pioneering photographic compilation — first published as a list in 1903 — received attention. After producing 100 copies of an album with 100 Lincoln portraits in 1911, four sets of 28 albums with silver prints from Brady’s glass plates were printed for subscribers in 1912.

On October 4, 1941, during the presentation of his photographs to Lincoln Memorial University, Dr. Meserve gave a detailed address<sup>2</sup>, “*The Photographs of Abraham Lincoln and the Romance of their Collection*”:

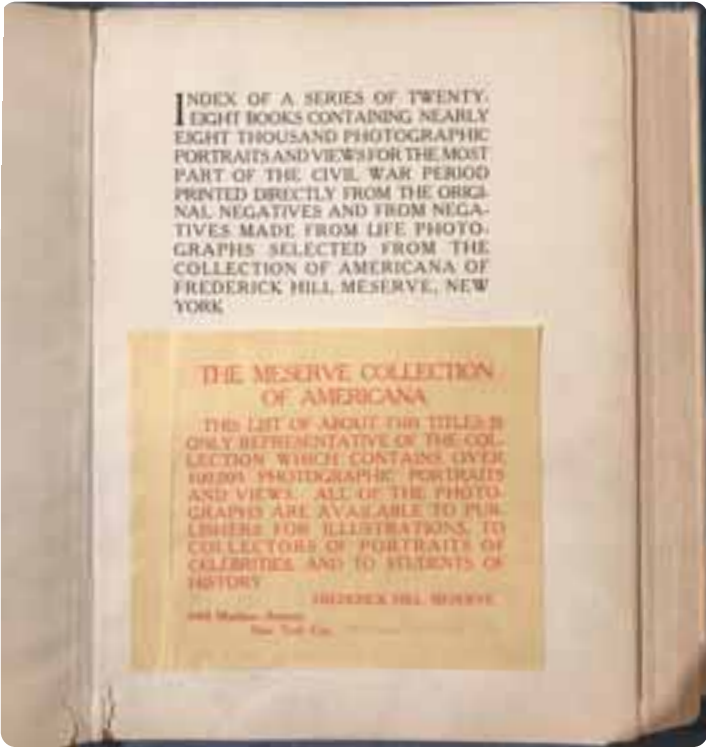
“At the beginning of this century, the people who had known Lincoln, or had even seen him, were fast disappearing... It was then that a group of serious men were collecting many books which had already been written about him... The buying competition of the individuals of this limited group and their imitators put high prices on items which were already scarce. When, in addition to the general collection of Americana, I began my own researches in the more narrow field of the life photographs of Lincoln, these collectors of the books were my allies and earnest helpers: Judge Daniel Fish of Minneapolis, Major William H. Lambert, Judd Stewart of Plainfield, New Jersey, Benjamin Oakleaf of Moline, Wisconsin, they were my eyes and ears in my search for the photographic portraits of Lincoln...»

<sup>1</sup> Meserve, Frederick Hill and Sandburg, Carl, “*The Photographs of Abraham Lincoln*” (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1944)

<sup>2</sup> Meserve, Frederick Hill, “*The Photographs of Abraham Lincoln and the Romance of their Collection*,” address given at Lincoln Memorial University, 4 October 1941



• Meserve. *Portraits of the Civil War period*, 1903. Possibly the earliest printed catalogue of historic photography



• Meserve. *Introduction volume to the impressive set of 28 albums in folio*, 1915, New York Public Library



# WINFRED PORTER TRUESDELL

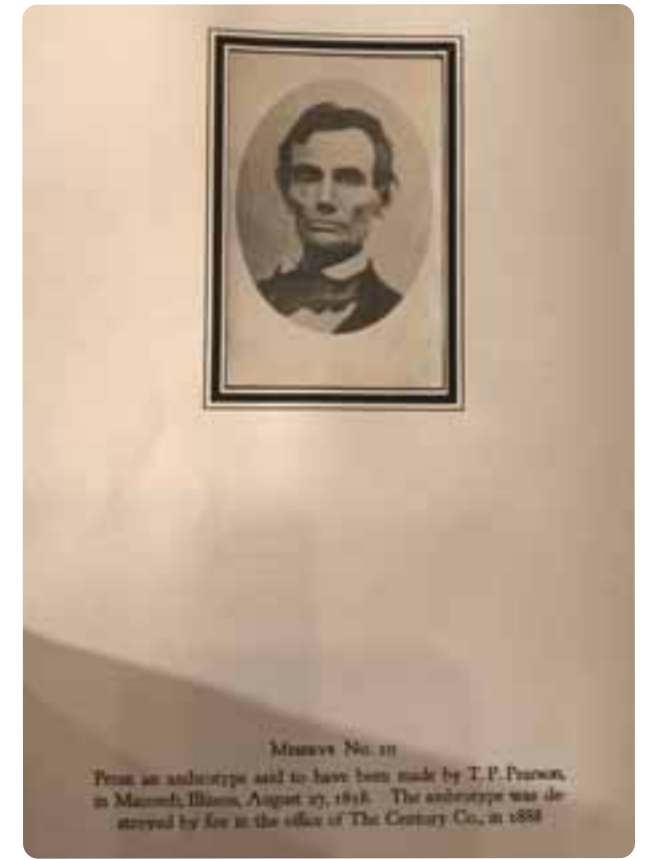
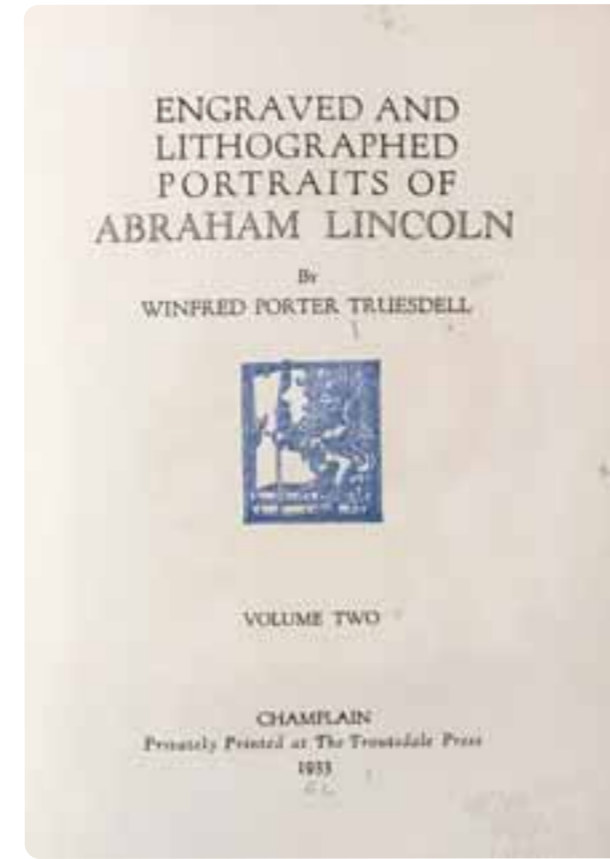
The first attempt to publish a catalogue raisonné of Abraham Lincoln portraits was made by Winfred Porter Truesdell (1880 - 1939)<sup>3</sup>, an internationally known art publisher who lived in the Village of Champlain, New York. He amassed a collection of thousands of bookplates, lithographs and photographs and published many books related to printing between the years 1903 and 1933. His best-known publication was an art magazine called *The Print Connoisseur* which he printed between 1920 and 1932. It is likely that many people today have never heard of Truesdell. He is certainly Champlain's unknown art publisher.

Truesdell was considered an authority on George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War and often gave talks on these subjects. Truesdell spent many years collecting Abraham Lincoln lithographs. In 1916, he planned to publish all of the portraits and engravings of Abraham Lincoln. He was in discussions with Frederick Hill Meserve to use prints of Lincoln photographs for his upcoming book. In 1911, Meserve had published his authoritative book on all of the Lincoln photographs known to exist. Truesdell wanted to print a similar book and Meserve offered him 112 prints from his exclusive negatives.

In 1918, Hugh McLellan, semi-retired from the architectural business in N.Y.C., had moved back to Champlain to settle his father, Charles Woodberry McLellan's estate. Truesdell was interested in McLellan's Lincoln collection and visited Champlain several times to see it. Over the next five years, he helped McLellan catalog the collection, arranged meetings with buyers and auction houses in N.Y.C. and kept abreast of similar auctions from the other Big Five. He also used some of McLellan's material for his upcoming Lincoln books. Also, Truesdell was instrumental in helping McLellan establish his press and quickly became his mentor. Starting in the early 1920s, Truesdell went to Europe three times in search of art. He needed McLellan to manage his affairs, pay bills, handle printing problems and correspond with authors. McLellan found his hands full handling Truesdell's magazine printing and overdue bills. In 1922, Hugh McLellan suggested to Truesdell that he move to Champlain and establish his own press. Truesdell quickly realized that it would be cheaper to live in Champlain than in New York City. He knew that he did not have to pay rent for an apartment or office space as he was using the same space as McLellan's press. He spent the next year moving his printing equipment and was permanently in Champlain by Christmas of 1923. He stayed in an empty house that McLellan owned.

In 1920, Truesdell had printed an announcement for the upcoming book but it wouldn't be until 1933 before he printed Volume 2 of the planned four-volume series. *"Engraved and lithographed portraits of Abraham Lincoln, Priv. print, at the Troutsdale press, 1933."*

*"For many years collectors of prints and other Lincolniana have been greatly handicapped by the lack of a proper list on which to base and identify their portraits. The present volume enumerates and describes in detail all the known engravings, etchings, lithographs and wood engravings of Lincoln.*



- Trusedell, volume 2, 1933, title-page and page of an extremely expensive publication

*The preparation of this check list has engaged the author's attention for many years, and every print described has been examined by him personally. In addition to his own collection, he has had the courteous privilege of examining all the larger collections of the Country, including those of the late Major W. H. Lambert, the late Mr. Charles W. McLellan, Mr. H. McTheil Bland, Mr. Judd Stewart, Mr. W. C. Crane, and others, to which reference will be made in the work itself."*<sup>3</sup>

Volume 2 contains 31 plates listed in the index, with over 80 images of Lincoln, with a frontispiece original woodcut in five colors, engraved by Harry Cimino, after Photograph No. 26. Several of the plates are from the author's own collection. The preface explains the cataloguing system and that this volume, Volume 2, is being presented before volume 1, out of a planned four volumes.

Truesdell died before printing the other three volumes. In March of 1942, Dr. Louis A. Warren, Director of the Lincoln National Life Foundation, visited Champlain and met Hugh McLellan and Edythe Truesdell. He purchased Truesdell's Lincoln and Civil War collection for the foundation. *"The compilation by Winfred Porter Truesdell, was so rare it was by then far more expensive than most of the prints it depicted and so incomplete that all that had ever been issued was, curiously and inexplicably, Volume 2."* (Harold Holzer<sup>4</sup>).

<sup>3,4</sup>Holzer, Harold, *"The Lincoln Visual Image: Abraham Lincoln and the Popular Print (with Gabor S. Boritt & Mark E. Neely Jr.)*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1984

# LLOYD OSTENDORF

“The second generation of Lincoln historians, “Lloyd Ostendorf’s *Lincoln in Photographs: An Album of Every Known Pose* (with Charles Hamilton, 1963) and Stefan Lorant’s *Lincoln: A Picture Story of His Life*, 1969, elevated the study of Lincoln images... Their research and scholarship helped elevate the Lincoln image into a serious study.” (Harold Holzer<sup>5</sup>)

Ostendorff’s numbering of Lincoln photographic portraits becomes the preferred system, and the *Album of Every Known Pose*<sup>6</sup> includes doubtful portraits and possibly lost portraits, including the 1861 Clyde long lost daguerreotype, on page 373.

An artist, photographer, and Lincoln historian, Lloyd Ostendorf was born in Dayton in 1921. A gifted child artist, he became fascinated with Abraham Lincoln’s face on a penny which his mother had given him. When Lloyd entered Stivers in 1935, he fell under the tutelage of an equally gifted art teacher, Martha Schauer, who helped him develop his talent. His teachers tried in vain to get Lloyd to draw subjects other than Abraham Lincoln. Upon graduation Lloyd attended the school of art at the Dayton Art Institute. After the war, he took a job as a commercial artist for the Journal Herald... and in 1950 he became a self-employed commercial artist, producing religious art, greeting cards, portraits, and innumerable pencil sketches of Lincoln.

Lloyd collected and owned the largest collection of Lincoln pictures and memorabilia in the United States. He wrote two biographical books about Lincoln (both illustrated by the artist), created two books of illustrations about Lincoln, and edited and illustrated another biography of his beloved Lincoln. Even in his other hobby – boating – Lloyd carried over his love of Lincoln by naming his steamboat replica Abraham Lincoln.

The Chicago Lincoln is a statue of a standing, beardless Abraham Lincoln in Lincoln Square Chicago. The statue was designed by Lloyd Ostendorf for a city contest and modeled by sculptor Avar Fairbanks, and erected on October 16, 1956.

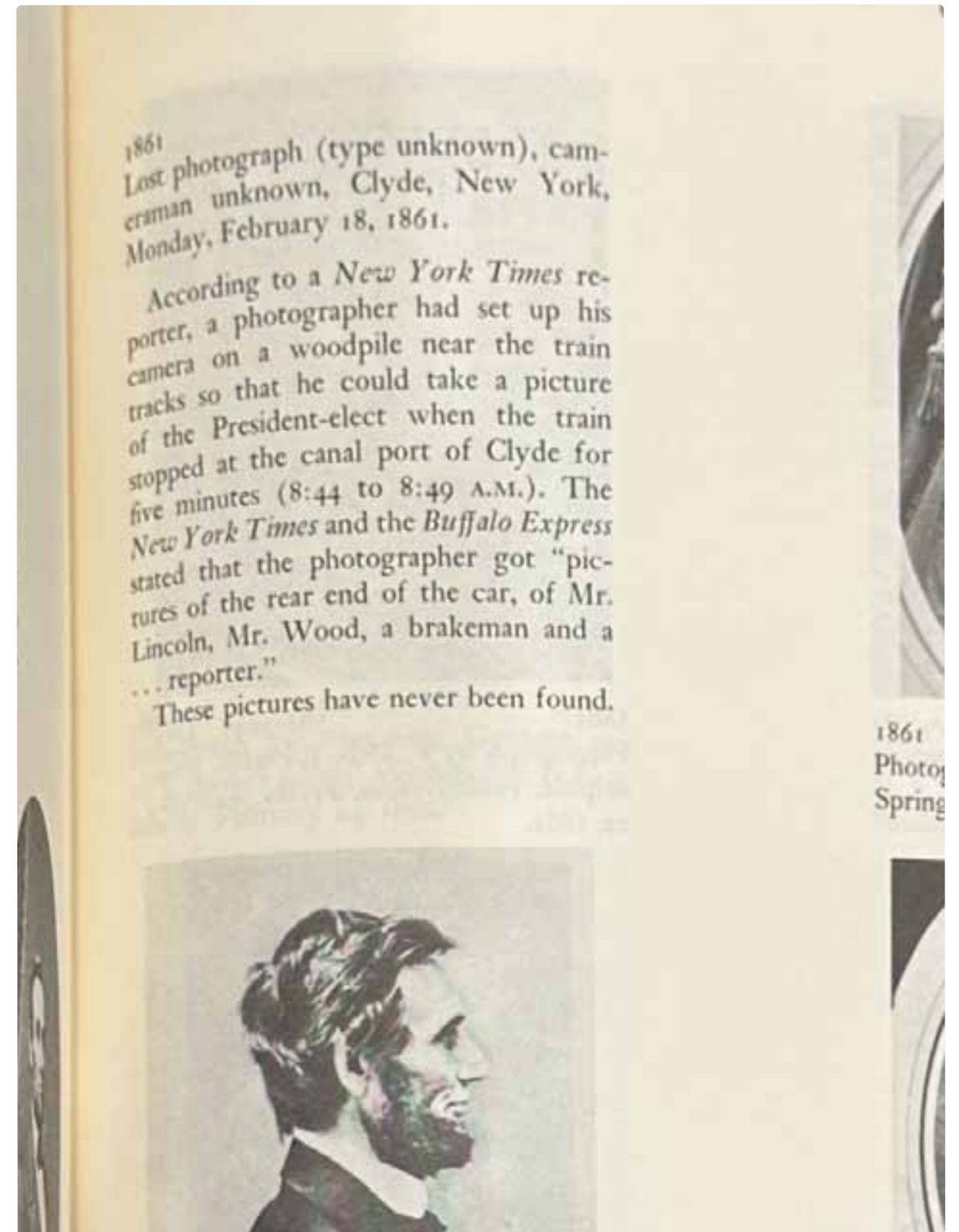
Today a mural, “*Lincoln’s Visit to Clyde*”, memorializes the stop by Lincoln’s Inaugural Train in Clyde on 18 February 1861, the only stop the train made between Rochester and Syracuse. It depicts president-elect Lincoln speaking to an immense crowd, which had gathered at the depot on Monday 18 February 1861. The mural is the artwork of Robert Gillespie of Penn Yan, New York, after Lloyd Ostendorf indications and is located on the cast wall of the Express Lane Car Wash, standing near the original passengers depot<sup>7</sup>. Ostendorf’s third augmented and corrected edition, 1998 is still unchallenged<sup>8</sup>. This report uses the Ostendorf updated nomenclature.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Holzer, Harold, “*The Lincoln Visual Image...*”, 1984

<sup>6</sup> Ostendorf, Lloyd and Hamilton, Charles. “*Lincoln in Photographs: An Album of Every Known Pose*.” Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963

<sup>7</sup> Gillespie, Robert. “*Lincoln’s Visit to Clyde Mural*.” Clyde, New York, 2009

<sup>8</sup> Ostendorf, Lloyd. “*Lincoln’s Photographs: A Complete Album*.” Dayton, 1998, page 395



• «Lost Photograph» in Ostendorf, “*Lincoln’s Photographs: A Complete Album*.” Dayton, 1998, page 395





• III •

## ONLY ONE KNOWN ABRAHAM LINCOLN PORTRAIT IN DAGUERREOTYPE

- *Quarter-plate daguerreotype, 1846*
- *Quarter-plate copy-daguerreotype, 1858*
- *Half-plate copy-daguerreotype, 1864*

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# NICHOLAS H. SHEPHERD - 1846

## Quarter plate daguerreotype, Lincoln Congressman-elect, Springfield, 1846

This unsigned and undated daguerreian portrait depicts Abraham Lincoln elegantly dressed as a Congressman-elect from Illinois in August 1846. It was donated to the Library of Congress in October 1937 by Lincoln’s granddaughter, Mary Lincoln Isham, along with a pairing portrait of Mary Todd Lincoln (Reference O-1<sup>1</sup>).

Robert T. Lincoln, their son, expressed doubt about the portraits’ origin, stating he didn’t believe photographers were present in Springfield, then a small town, in the 1840s. The daguerreotype was formally attributed to Nicholas H. Shepherd by Gibson William Harris, in his November 1903 publication<sup>2</sup> *“My Recollections of Abraham Lincoln”*:

*“I feel confident I am not mistaken in recognizing the portrait as the work of my friend Shephard, before whose camera I know Mr Lincoln sat once or oftener. The claim repeatedly made for it of being the earliest portrait of Abraham Lincoln remains, as far as I know, an undisputed fact....”* Harris was law student in Lincoln’s office during 18 months and with Shepherd he was roommates during the whole period. Shepherd advertised a daguerreian gallery in Springfield. Mary Todd Lincoln cherished these first portraits, saying: *“These are my two most precious pictures, taken when we were young and so desperately in love.”*<sup>3</sup>



• Shepherd in Springfield, 1845      • Mary Todd Lincoln, Springfield, 1846      • Harris formal identifaction, 1903



• O-1

<sup>1</sup> Ostendorf, Lloyd. *“Lincoln’s photographs: a complete album.”* Dayton, 1998, p. 4-5

<sup>2</sup> Harris, Gibson William. *“My Recollections of Abraham Lincoln.”* Woman’s Home Companion, November 1903, pp. 9-11; see also page 102-103 of this report

<sup>3</sup> Ostendorf, Lloyd and Oleksy, Walter, eds. *“Lincoln’s Unknown Private Life: An Oral History by His Black Housekeeper Mariab Vance, 1850-1860.”* Mamaroneck, N.Y.: Hastings House Book Publ., 1995



# HANKS-CHAPMAN COPY-DAG - 1858

## Quarter plate daguerreotype after an albumen print, September 1858

This copy daguerreotype was created by photographing an albumen print of the September 26, 1858 pose (O-9 <sup>4</sup>) attributed by Lloyd Ostendorf to Christopher Smith German (1814-1896).

The photographer likely crafted the copy-daguerreotype himself at Abraham Lincoln's request, as Lincoln gave the daguerreotype to Harriet Chapman, daughter of his cousin Dennis Hanks, with a note saying *"this is not a very good-looking picture, but it's the best that could be produced from the poor subject"*. We can deduce from this gift that Abraham Lincoln appreciates daguerreotypes.

Harriet's son, R.N. Chapman, shared the photograph's story with Lincoln biographer Ida M. Tarbell. She published a retouched version of the image with an account of the Chapman provenance in *McClure's Magazine*, January 1896, pp.118-119 <sup>5</sup>. Meserve could access the plate and photograph it out of the case. A silver print is accessible at the Library of Congress (Joseph Verner Reed gift, July 1955).

A different copy-daguerreotype was presented to the public at Christie's auction on May 12, 1999, lot 197 <sup>6</sup>. Indeed, the one reproduced in Meserve's documentation shows a shorter framing in the lower part of the bust.



• German albumen print, O-9, , follows on page 191



• Meserve documentation print, Library of Congress



• Copy-dag of O-9

<sup>4</sup> Ostendorf, Lloyd and Hamilton, Charles. *"Lincoln in Photographs: An Album of Every Known Pose."* Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963, O-9

<sup>5</sup> Tarbell, Ida M. *McClure's Magazine*, vol. 6, no. 2, January 1896, pp. 118-119

<sup>6</sup> Christie's. "Sale 9082, Lot 197." New York, 12 May 1999



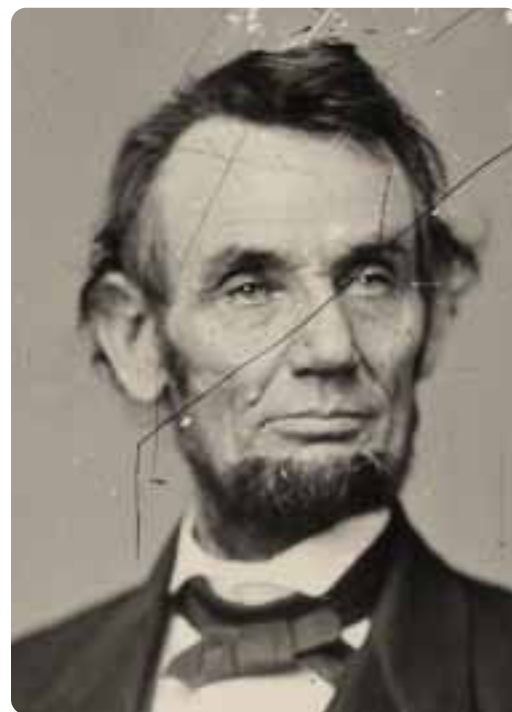
## HALF-PLATE COPY-DAG

### Half plate copy-daguerreotype, Washington, Brady Gallery, February 1864 (?)

This half-plate is a period copy-daguerreotype of a paper print (lost) from one of the multiple images taken by Anthony Berger at Brady's gallery in Washington, DC, on 9 February 1864 (O-91<sup>4</sup>). This date is significant as it was part of a series of photographs taken for artist Francis B. Carpenter's reference for his painting *"The First Reading of the Emancipation Proclamation Before the Cabinet"*.

This image has gained additional prominence as the model for the \$5 bill since its redesign in 2001.

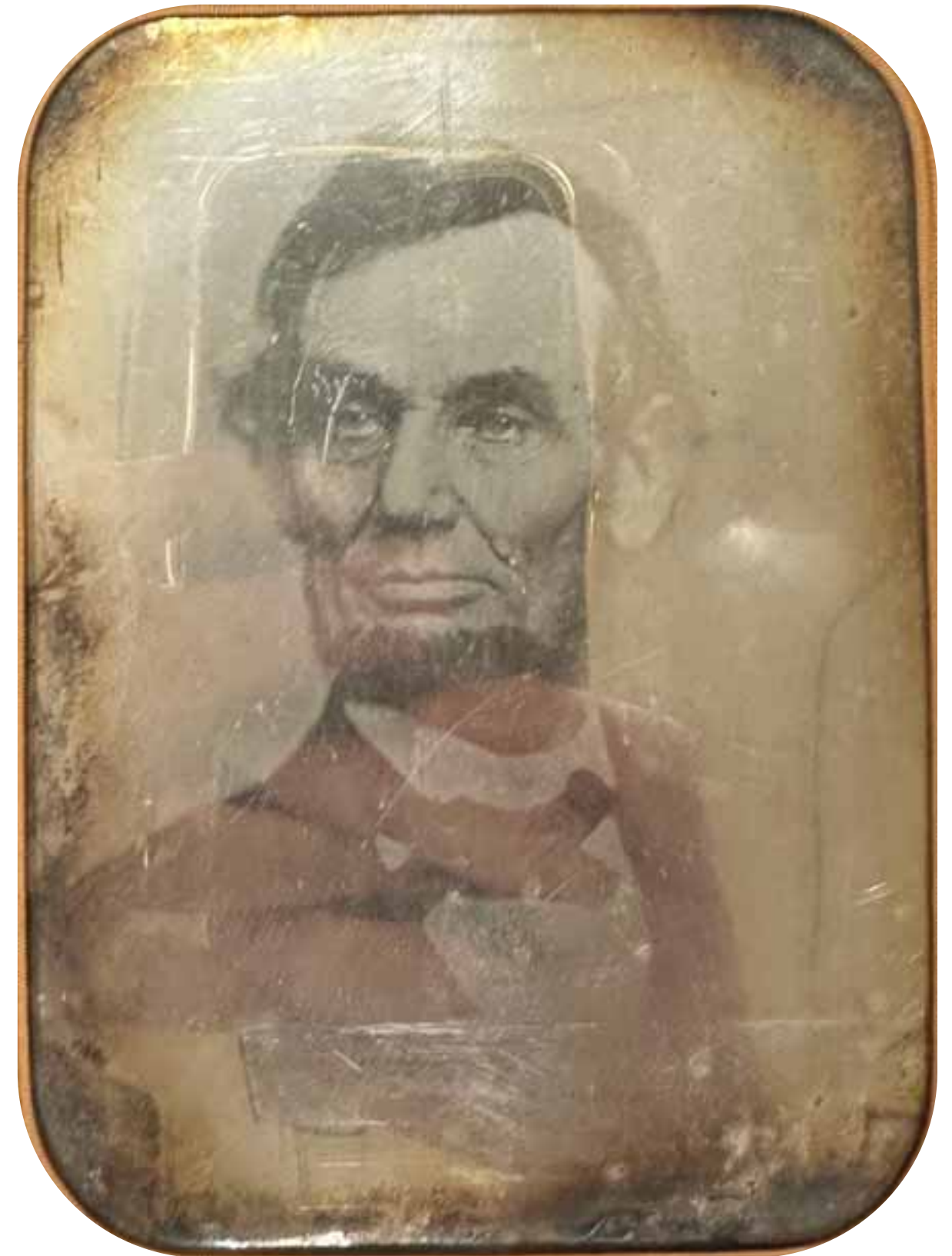
The dag should be considered as produced in the same studio. The creation of a half-plate daguerreotype from a paper print in 1864 underscores the extremely rare use of daguerreotype technology when newer photographic methods were becoming prevalent. Only the most important studios could afford this exceptional technology, as they could produce their own dangerous chemicals which had disappeared elsewhere from chemist shops and drugstores. The very last dated examples are, in fact, from Southworth and Hawes in Boston and Brady's studio in Washington.



• (O-91) Detail, courtesy Library of Congress

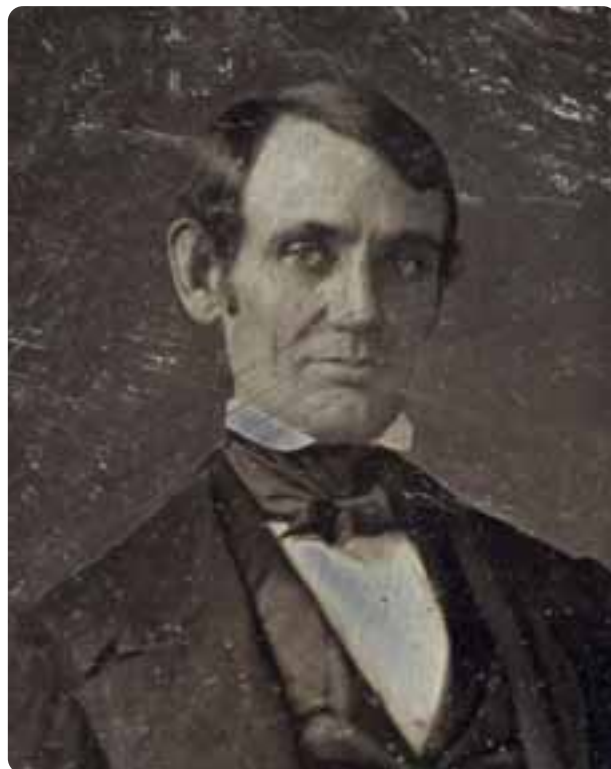


• Model for the portrait on the U.S. \$ 5 bill since 2001



• Copy-dag of 1864 albumen paper portrait (O-91)





• O-1. Springfield daguerreotype, 1846 (detail)



• Albert Kaplan daguerreotype, c. 1843 (detail)



• Hay Wadsworth daguerreotype, c. 1843 (detail)



• Leo Stashin's full plate, 1849 (detail)

• IV •

## FALSE HOPES AND TRUE DISAPPOINTMENTS

- *Leo Stashin's 1968 Discovery*
- *Claude Frechette's 1980 Intriguing Proposition*
- *Christie's 1998 Unattributed Daguerreotype*
- *The Mississippi Composite Daguerreotype*
- *The 2013 eBay-Whiting Sensation*
- *Young-Orleman's 2014 Claim*

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# LEO STASHIN'S DISCOVERY - 1968

## Full plate daguerreotype, circa 1849

This claim is perhaps the most controversial one can imagine, and the 2024 public might struggle to understand how the 1968 public could attempt to recognize Lincoln in this image. Identification and analysis of old photographs is a patient art; one is often surprised to understand how different one's neighbor's vision can be.

*"Leo Stashin, a photographer, who in recent years turned to collecting and identifying daguerreotypes of 19th century American statesmen, actors, inventors and businessmen, died Saturday of cancer in St. Luke's Hospital. He was 54 years old and lived at 75 Bank Street. At his death Mr. Stashin was writing a book on an 1849 daguerreotype he found in a Greenwich Village art shop and which he identified as one of Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln experts disagreed with his identification. This "find" led him, however, to discover and identify other daguerreotypes, including plates of Presidents John Tyler, Zachary Taylor, Millard Fillmore and Franklin Pierce."* (New York Times, 29 October 1973)

Harold Holzer, in *"The Lincoln Visual Image: A Personal Journey of Discovery,"* recounts:

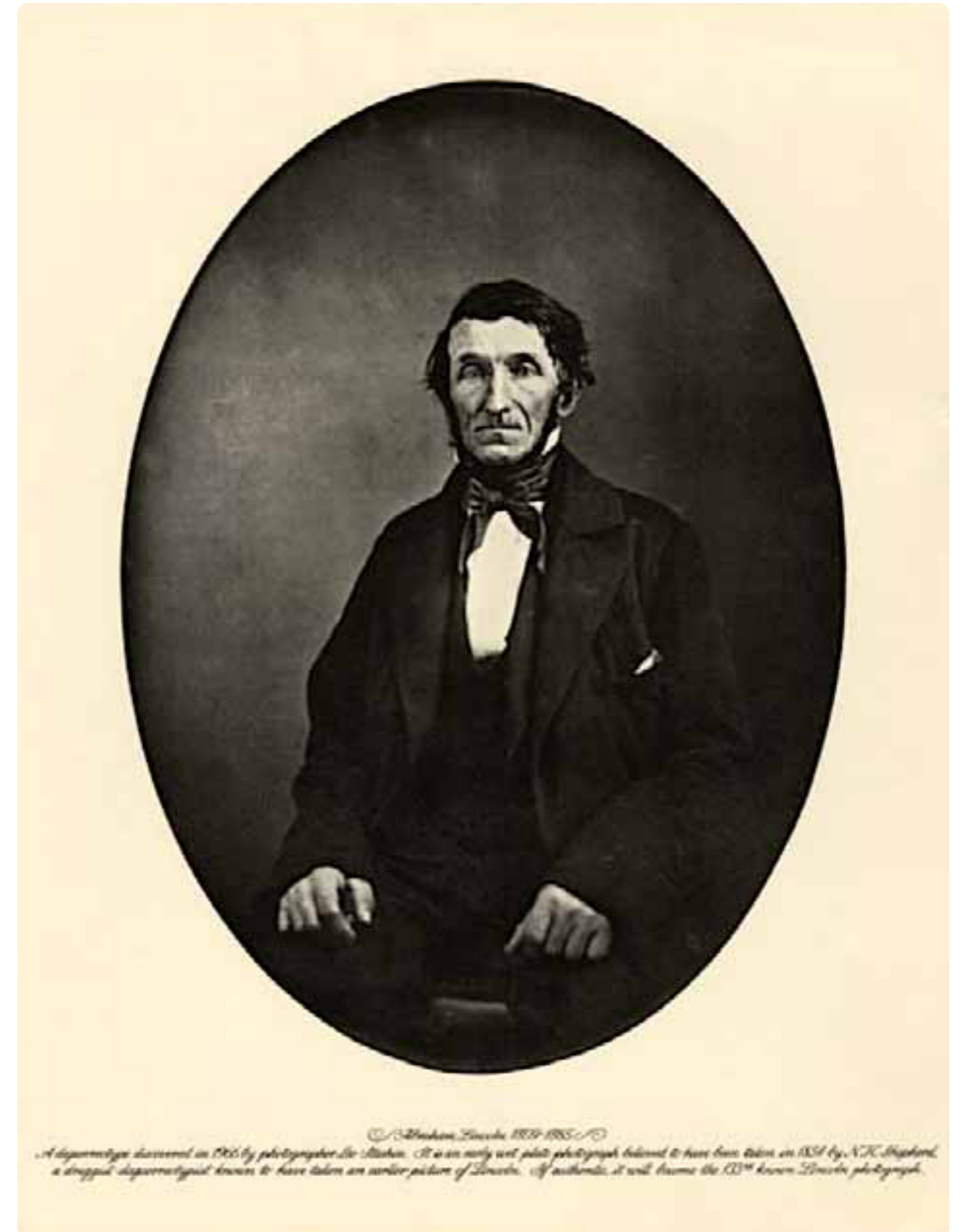
*"In 1968, the New York Times<sup>1</sup> had published a story about this tireless researcher, illustrating it with a daguerreotype he had discovered, which, he insisted, against a tide of criticism, was an early, unknown portrait of Abraham Lincoln. I studied the picture closely: the man seemed too old, too wide around the middle. His nose was too pointy, his brow too narrow, the lips too thin. But Stashin had subjected the imposing full-plate to a barrage of scientific tests and computer scans — such as they were nearly forty years ago — and had identified countless points of similarity, including scars, earlobes, and facial moles. Stashin was insistent. — "The portrait is the only photograph of Lincoln taken from a high camera angle," — he explained to the Times. — "This would tend to elongate the nose, foreshorten the brow and change the perspective in which we have been accustomed to seeing his face. The angle makes the nose seem longer."*

Leo Stashin became a friend to young Harold Holzer and transmitted his passion for hunting, chasing, and collecting Lincoln portraits and memorabilia:

*"When we got our first apartment on the West Side, we didn't know what to hang on the walls," he said. A photographer friend, Leo Stashin, invited the young couple on his trips to Pennsylvania Dutch country, in search of daguerreotypes, early photographs. "He said 'You should collect Lincoln, and also you can furnish your home that way,'" Holzer recalled<sup>2</sup>.*

<sup>1</sup> Deschin, Jacob. "Photography: Lincoln's Portrait In Controversy." The New York Times, 21 Jan. 1968

<sup>2</sup> Holzer, Harold, Interview, 19 September 2018, on <https://eu.lohud.com/story/news/local/westchester/2018/09/19/lincoln-collection-nyc-auction/1333249002/>





# ALBERT KAPLAN PLATE - 1987

## Quarter plate daguerreotype, circa 1844

The second famous case in recent history is Albert Kaplan's plate, which gained credibility through the analysis of a plastic surgeon related to a family member.

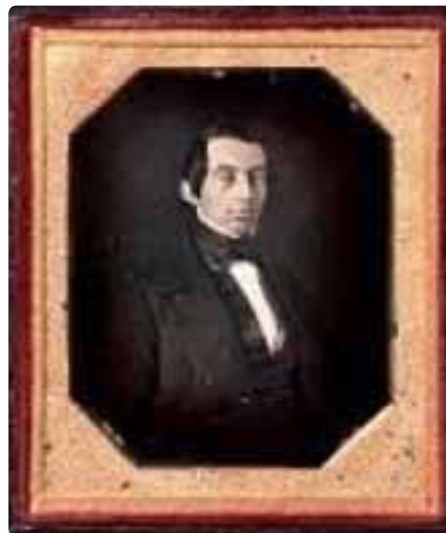
Claude N. Frechette, M.D., a plastic and reconstructive surgeon, examined the Kaplan daguerreotype:

*"In 1987, a photographic print of an exceptionally high quality daguerreotype of a robust, confident-looking, and smartly dressed young man was brought to my office in Paris on, interestingly, Lincoln's birthday, February 12 (Figure 1a). The owner of the daguerreotype, which had been purchased from a gallery in New York City in 1977, was Mr. Albert Kaplan, an American then residing in Paris. Mr. Kaplan was convinced, after years of personal research, that the young man pictured in the daguerreotype was Abraham Lincoln. He had sought me out to subject his conviction to the science of my medical specialty.... As a plastic and reconstructive surgeon, I examined the Kaplan based on my professional understanding of facial structure and aging. The most objective approach in examining a century-and-a-half old image seemed to be that of a plastic surgeon who evaluates pre- and postoperative photographs and anthropomorphic data of patients with cranio-facial deformities."*<sup>3</sup>

The production area and dating of the daguerreotype were established by an expert:

*"In 1980, three years after Kaplan purchased his purported Daguerreotype of Lincoln, one of Kaplan's experts, Grant B. Romer, a conservator with George Eastman House in Rochester, New York, disassembled and examined the Daguerreotype and declared that it was an "American product made prior to 1845" and probably an "earlier rather than later 1840s date." No reason at all to dispute Romer's findings." (Joelle Steele, "Face to Face: Analysis and Comparison of Facial Features to Authenticate Identities of People in Photographs")*<sup>4</sup>.

The persistence of this image in public consciousness, despite ongoing debates about its authenticity, demonstrates the enduring fascination with potential early portraits of Abraham Lincoln.



• Courtesy (Albert Kaplan collection)

<sup>3</sup> Frechette, Claude N. "The Kaplan Daguerreotype of Abraham Lincoln." Accessed 30 December 2024. <https://younglincolnportrait.com/Frechette.asp>

<sup>4</sup> Steele, Joelle. "Face to Face: Analysis and Comparison of Facial Features to Authenticate Identities of People in Photographs." Joelle Steele Enterprises, 2013, cover illustration



## HAY WADSWORTH PLATE - 1998

### Quarter Plate. Portrait of a Gentleman, *Believed to be Abraham Lincoln*, 1843

The much-debated Hay Wadsworth daguerreotype, dated 1843 and thought by some to be the first image of Abraham Lincoln, was presented by Christie's. Experts have argued about whether the person photographed is Lincoln ever since the consignors, Robert and Joan Hoffman of Pittsford, N.Y., a suburb of Rochester, unveiled it in 1993. The Hoffmans acquired the three-and-a-half by three-inch leather-encased image from the liquidator for the descendants of Lincoln's private secretary, John Milton Hay.

To support their contention that the daguerreotype sitter was Lincoln, the Hoffmans and several other believers subjected the image to a range of analyses, from criminal identification techniques to computer "aging" to scrutiny of the vein patterns in the subject's hand.

Such data convinced Grant Romer, Director of Education at the prestigious International Museum of Photography at the George Eastman House in Rochester, New York. He officially declared, *"I recognize the case for the probable cause to believe the subject of the daguerreotype is Abraham Lincoln."* In a recent interview Romer added: *"It was the Chicago test that did it for me. I know full well that a lot of people out there see Jesus in their spaghetti, and that image-hungry Americans seem to find 'Lincolns' much in the same spirit. But this is a compelling image. It may be hard to reconcile with other poses, but this is a younger man. Of all the 'Lincolns' I've seen, and I've seen plenty, this is the one that has to be seriously looked at. It's fit to be brought to a wider audience."*<sup>4</sup>

The doubters, including many Lincoln historians and artists, simply pointed out the differences in facial features between the man in the Hoffmans' image and the earliest documented likeness of Lincoln, now in the Library of Congress. Leading the skeptics was Lloyd Ostendorf of Dayton, Ohio, the co-author of *"Lincoln in Photographs"* and a renowned expert. *"Anyone who buys it will pay a lot of money for a fake,"* he said. Ostendorf said the physical features of the man in the picture were vastly different from Lincoln's, pointing specifically to the ears, nose, shoulders and eyes.

The Hoffmans, who bought the daguerreotype in 1993 for an undisclosed sum, had decided to let the market rule. The daguerreotype failed to sell at Christie's. The auctioneer started the bidding at \$110,000 and, after two bids, stopped at \$150,000, below the estimate of \$200,000 to \$300,000.

*"We're sorry it didn't sell,"* an obviously disappointed Mr. Hoffman said, adding, *"We wanted it to go to the next level of custodians, preferably a public institution."* But he said he still believed the image was Lincoln's. *"This is an ongoing process,"* Mr. Hoffman said. *"We are talking about more research — there's a tremendous amount of new photo analysis coming available in the next few years."*<sup>5</sup>



<sup>4</sup> "Is This The First Photograph Of Abraham Lincoln?" American Heritage. Accessed 30 December 2024. <https://www.americanheritage.com/first-photograph-abraham-lincoln>

<sup>5</sup> Dobrzynski, Judith H. "Would-Be Image of Lincoln Fails to Sell." *The New York Times*, 7 October 1998

## THE MISSISSIPPI COMPOSITE PLATE

### Half plate daguerreotype, no date

The Mississippi State catalogue entry for this item describes it as a “*daguerreotype (possibly a reproduction)*” featuring a reversed image of Abraham Lincoln’s bust-length portrait. The original image was captured by Alexander Hesler in Springfield, Illinois on 3 June 1860, and is referenced as O-26<sup>6</sup>.

This entry raises some important points. The uncertainty about whether it’s an original daguerreotype or a reproduction is noteworthy.

The image is likely a recent reproduction rather than an original daguerreotype from 1860.

This is because in the last 30 years, there has been a revival of interest in original photographic processes, including daguerreotypes. Such reproductions are often created for various reasons, including contemporary art, historical reenactments, or occasionally to deceive collectors.

In this case, it’s unlikely to be a deliberate fake, as the nature of the reproduction is apparent. It may have been created as an exercise during a daguerreotype workshop, using a static subject that’s easier to capture with the lengthy daguerreotype process.

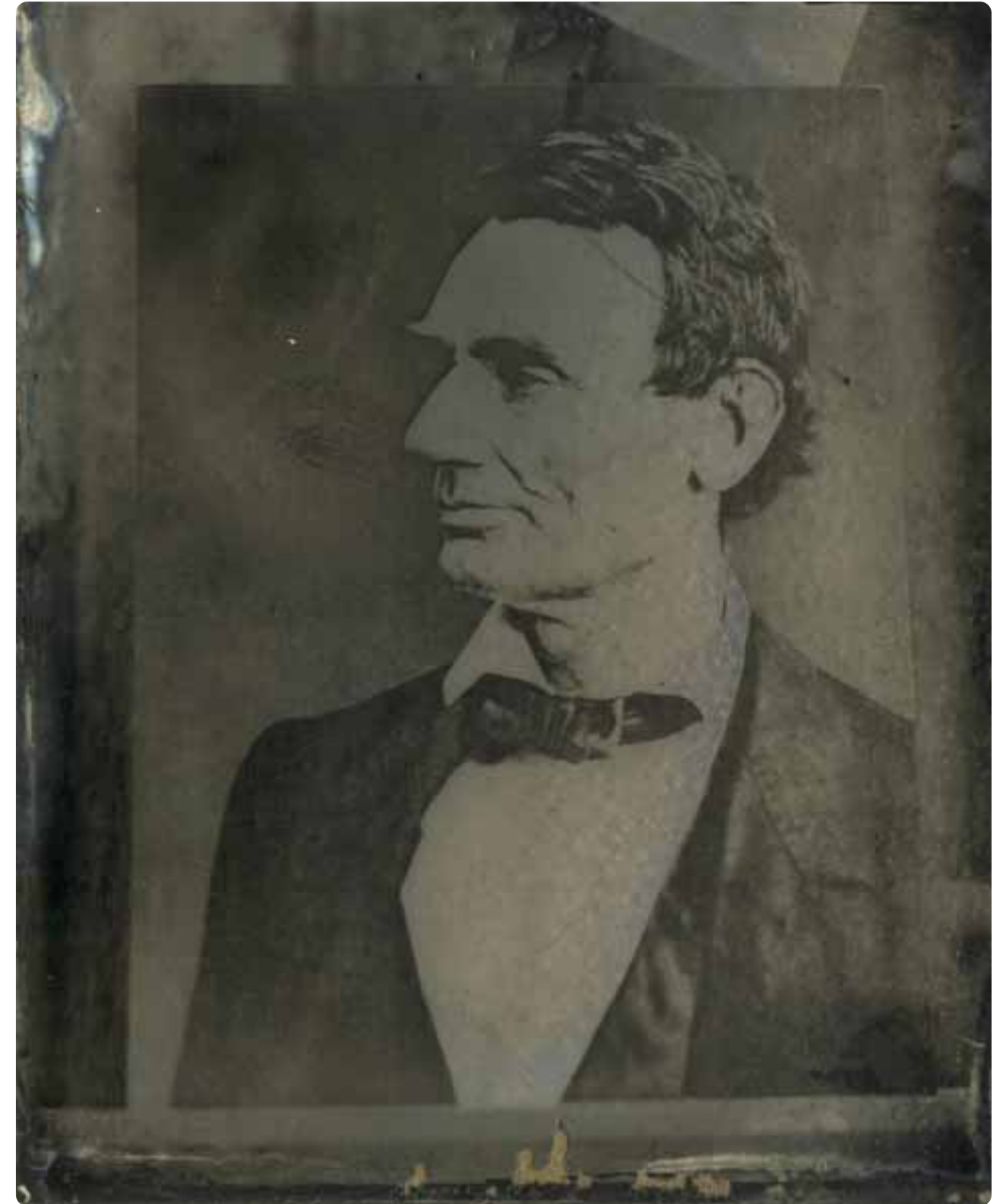
The lack of signature or documentation on the piece contributes to its mysterious nature, especially for iconographers unfamiliar with the daguerreotype process.

This case highlights the challenges in authenticating historical photographs and the importance of understanding both historical and contemporary photographic techniques when evaluating such items, especially when limited to online reproductions. Access to only digital versions further complicates the authentication process, as important physical characteristics and subtle details may be lost in digital reproduction. This underscores the need for caution when making definitive judgments about historical photographs based solely on online images.

The item is part of the Justice Frank J. and Virginia Williams Collection of Lincolniana and can be viewed online<sup>7</sup>.



• (O-26) see page 201



<sup>6</sup> Hamilton, Charles and Lloyd Ostendorf, eds. “*Lincoln in Photographs: An Album of Every Known Pose.*” Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963, p. 46.

<sup>7</sup> “*Daguerreotype Image of Abraham Lincoln, 1860.*” Frank and Virginia Williams Collection of Lincolniana, Mississippi State University Libraries. Accessed 30 December 2024. <https://scholarsjunction.msstate.edu/fvw-photographs/489/>



# THE EBAY-WHITING PLATE -2013

1/6 plate daguerreotype, circa 1850

This case was primarily promoted by a blog article by Neil Rhodes on April 11, 2013:

*“A newly discovered Daguerreotype was found by Justin Whiting of, Norwich Norfolk the United Kingdom, could be a new photographic piece in Abraham Lincoln’s historic life story. Purchased on Ebay from a power seller of Daguerreotypes Justin was sure it reminded him of someone. He’d been searching for an image like this for some time. In his mind, it could be no one else other than a young Abraham Lincoln!”*

Whiting’s approach to authentication raises several concerns:

*“He set about the process verifying the image by asking American museums if they were willing to help identify the man in the image.”*

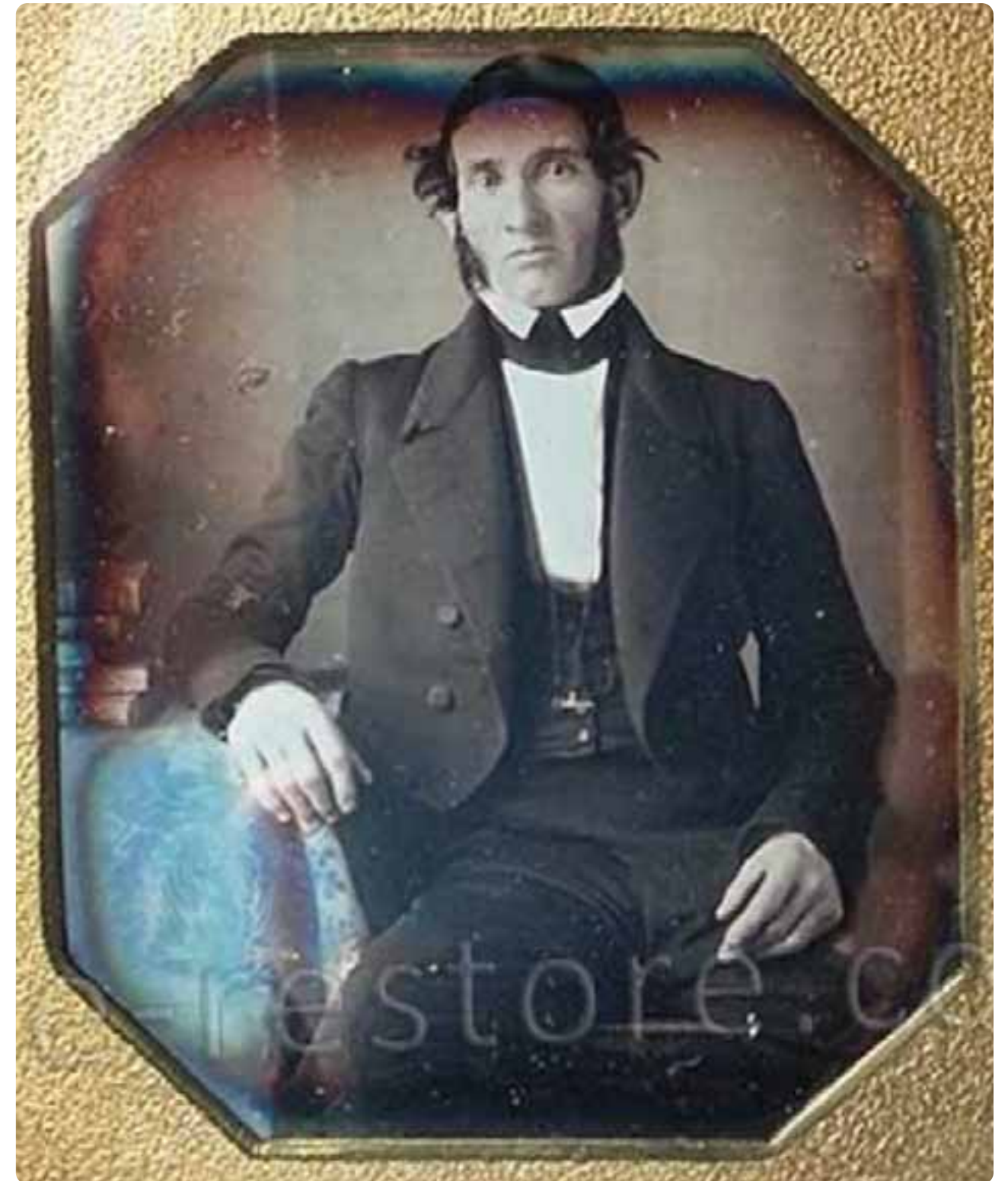
*“Justin contacted some museums in America to present his findings. He was expecting some very positive responses. Instead, he was shunned by one museum saying it was not Lincoln and looked nothing like him. They offered no further explanation other than “his hair looks ridiculous”. He soon realised It was not going to be easy, the American museums were very dismissive, with an attitude of, here we go another picture claiming to be Lincoln, “we get loads” they said.”*

Despite expert dismissal, Whiting persisted:

*“Undeterred Justin decided to hunt for someone who can offer a more scientific investigation to match the facial features. The scientific road now appears to be the only answer.”*

Whiting’s approach, while unconventional, reflects a growing trend of citizen historians leveraging digital platforms to contribute to historical discourse. However, it also underscores the delicate balance between encouraging public engagement with history and maintaining scholarly standards. This case, rather than simply cautioning against amateur research, invites a broader discussion on the future of historical inquiry in an increasingly interconnected world.

Comments and reactions have been following up since April 16, 2013 <sup>8</sup>.



• Courtesy Neil Rhodes

<sup>8</sup> Rhodes, Neil. “Rare Daguerreotype discovered of young Abraham Lincoln.” Image Restore, 11 April 2013.

<https://image-restore.co.uk/blog/rare-daguerreotype-discovered-of-young-abraham-lincoln/>



# YOUNG-ORLEMAN'S PLATE - 2014

## 1/6 plate daguerreotype, circa 1849

The complete story as told by Paul Grondahl for the *Times Union* in April 2014 is online <sup>9</sup>:

*“Brisbane Young was at the newspaper office, trying to convince me that he owns an unknown image of young Abraham Lincoln, an 1840s-era daguerreotype he purchased online in 2006 from a woman who said she bought it at a flea market in Virginia. The 47-year-old Belize-born wedding photographer and painting contractor from Queensbury will not say exactly how much he paid for it, but inferred it was a couple hundred bucks.*

*If, indeed, the silver-coated metallic plate turns out to be a well-dressed, bearded, top hat-wearing Lincoln in his early 30s — right hand thrust dramatically in between the buttons of his coat — it would be worth a large sum of money.”*

Despite being rejected by Lincoln experts, Young persists in his quest to authenticate the daguerreotype. He has invested significantly in this endeavor, seeking opinions from various experts and employing modern technology.

Young's friend, Greg Orleman, supports his claim: *“As soon as Brisbane showed it to me, I said that’s Abraham Lincoln,”* Orleman said. Young *«got lukewarm encouragement from Grant Romer, former director of the George Eastman House's advanced residency program in photographic conservation in Rochester. Romer wrote in a 2008 letter that Young's daguerreotype was "very worthy of serious consideration" but that authenticating it was fraught with obstacles. He did not render a final verdict, but urged Young to pursue the forensics analysis route and mentioned a \$500,000 estimate of its potential worth.»*

However, expert opinions remain skeptical: *“There’s no way that looks like Lincoln to me. The lips and many other things are wrong,”* said Dennis Holzman, owner of Holzman Antiques of Cohoes, a specialist in political ephemera.

Daniel Weinberg, owner of the Abraham Lincoln Book Shop in Chicago, was more emphatic: *“This is a no-brainer. It’s not him. Not even close. I’ve seen much better fakes. It’s just not Lincoln. This guy’s too much of a dandy. The beard is at the wrong time. Lincoln didn’t grow a beard until 1860. The nose isn’t out of joint like Lincoln’s. He doesn’t have that famous lower lip.”*

Weinberg added, *“I’ve heard so many of these stories over the years. The owners are true believers. They’ll fight to the death trying to prove something that can’t be proven.”*<sup>9</sup>



• Young's is a small "six-plate" daguerreotype, mounted behind a gold-colored oval mat

<sup>9</sup> Grondahl, Paul. "Image of young man tests conventional wisdom about Abraham Lincoln." *Times Union*, 3 April 2014. <https://www.timesunion.com/local/article/Image-of-young-man-tests-conventional-wisdom-5368677.php>



• V •

## RECENT PROVENANCE OF THE SUBJECT DAGUERRETYPE

- *New York City Photo Fairs, March 2017*
- *Discovery and Acquisition*

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# NYC PHOTO FAIR 31 MARCH 2017

The prestigious New York Photography Collectors Fair, organized by the AIPAD association<sup>1</sup>, was in full swing for its 2018 edition at Pier 94. Despite the arrival of limousines carrying stars and elegantly dressed attendees, the event seemed sparsely attended, with gallery stands appearing lost in the oversized hangar.

Concurrently, two more modest fairs were being prepared: one by the Daguerreian Society, and another by an association of Photograph and Postcard Dealers, Mary L Martin Ltd and finedags.com. The latter was scheduled for Friday, 31 March 2017, in the salons of the Watson Hotel.

This smaller fair garnered significant interest, attracting chic collectors of vintage photographs, museum directors, and even some exhibitors from Pier 94, who began arriving at the Watson Hotel as early as 8.00 AM.

Among the exhibitors was one of the most renowned daguerreotype dealers in the United States, who proudly introduced his son. The young man had recently begun selling his first described pieces online under his father’s guidance.



• Watson Hotel 440 W. 57th St., NYC, Vintage Photo Fair 31 March 2017 - Friday 9.30 AM - 6.00 PM

<sup>1</sup> AIPAD. “The Photography Show.” Accessed 30 Decemb 2024.  
<https://www.aipad.com/show>



• Watson Hotel Terrace, 440 W. 57th St., March 2017



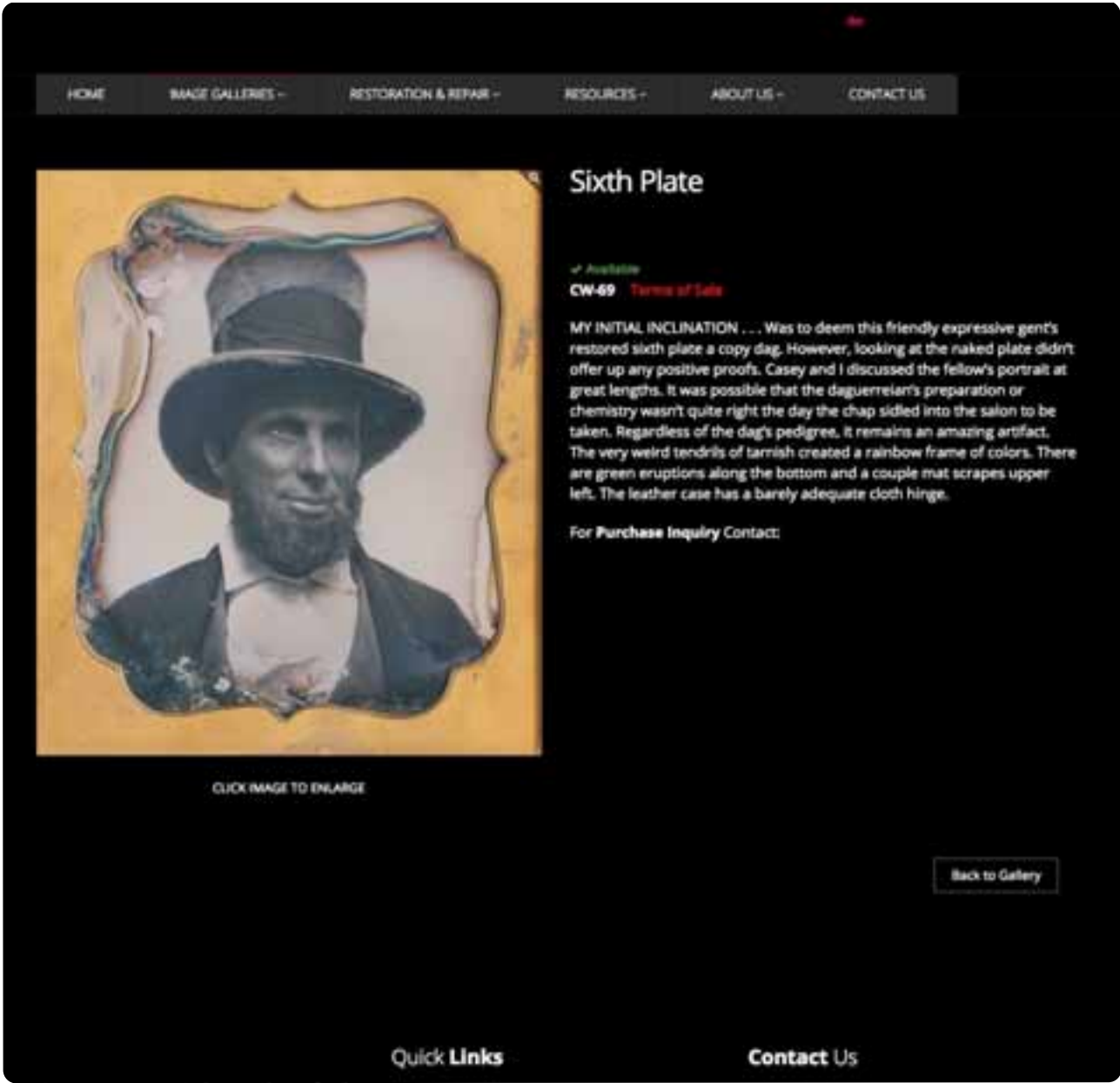
# DISCOVERY AND ACQUISITION

As the Watson Hotel fair neared its end, most distinguished visitors had left, and exhibitors were finalizing their last deals, often at discounted prices. It was during these final moments that the portrait we’re studying here emerged. The young dealer had been unsuccessful in selling it online for six months and to major collectors who had passed by without purchasing. Despite raising many questions, particularly about its flaws and unsightly stains, father and son had described it in their listing as follows:

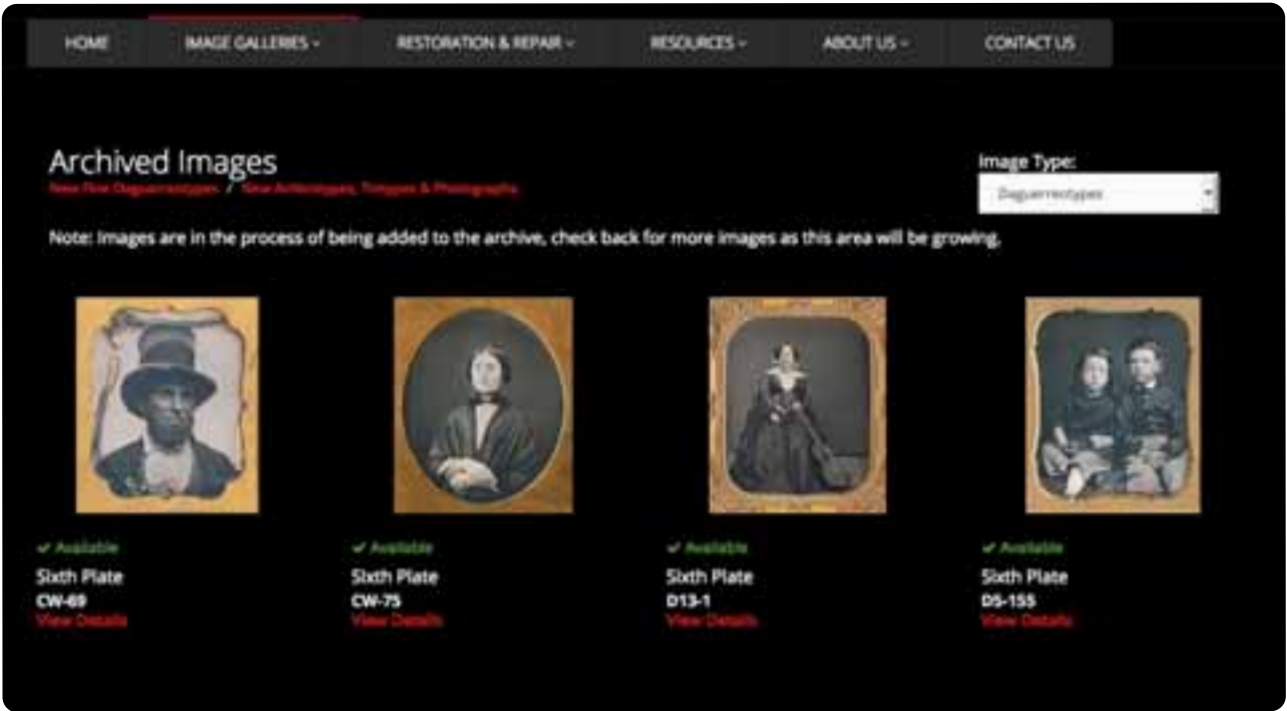
Original description of the 1/6 plate on the comercial site, March 2017 :

*“MY INITIAL INCLINATION... Was to deem this friendly expressive gent’s restored sixth plate a copy dag. However, looking at the naked plate didn’t offer up any positive proofs. We discussed the fellow’s portrait at great lengths. It was possible that the daguerreian’s preparation or chemistry wasn’t quite right the day the chap sidled into the salon to be taken. Regardless of the dag’s pedigree, it remains an amazing artifact. The very weird tendrils of tarnish created a rainbow frame of colors. There are green eruptions along the bottom and a couple mat scrapes upper left. The leather case has a barely adequate cloth hinge.”*

Initially, the portrait was considered as potentially another Lincoln look-alike from or before the Civil War era.



• Screenshot, 6 April 2018, portrait still «available»



• Screenshot, 6 April 2018, portrait still available



• *Grandpa' Higgins, Forshew, Hudson, N.Y.*



• *No name, no place, early 1860s (detail, reversed)*



• *No name, no place, early 1860s (detail)*



• *William J. Odell, Hartford, Conn. c. 1875*

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## JUST ONE MORE LINCOLN LOOK-ALIKE ?

- *Abraham Lincoln Became a Model for Americans*
- *A Daguerreotype That Predates Lincoln's Fame*

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# LINCOLN BECAME A MODEL FOR MANY

The discovery of this daguerreotype raises important questions about its authenticity and historical context. Before delving into a detailed investigation, it's crucial to address two key considerations, the first one being the challenges in distinguishing genuine Lincoln images from those of skilled impersonators and contemporary look-alikes.

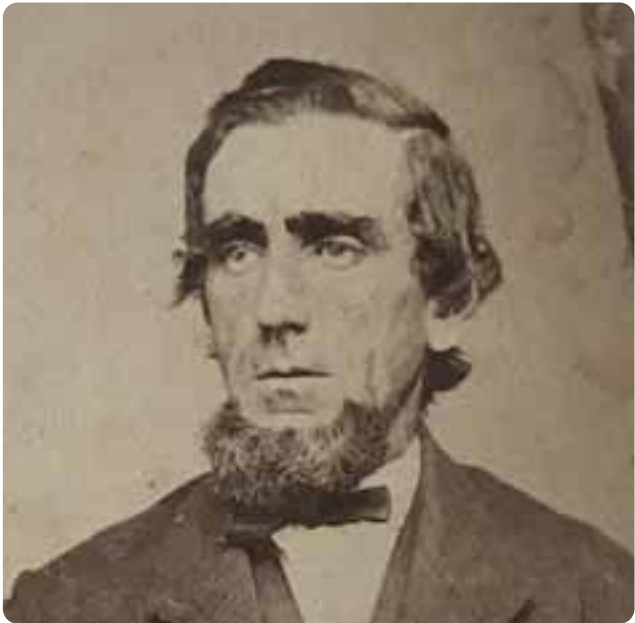
It's hard to say exactly how many Americans decided to resemble Abraham Lincoln during or after the Civil War, but Lincoln's distinctive beard certainly inspired many men of that era <sup>1</sup>. The style became quite popular, with many soldiers and civilians opting for similar facial hair. Lincoln's iconic look had a significant impact on American culture at the time, symbolizing leadership and resilience. While we might not have an exact number of look-alikes, it's safe to say that Lincoln's beard style was a significant trend of the period.

Many portraits of Lincoln look-alikes from the Civil War period can be found in family albums and archives, but nearly all are albumen carte-de-visite, with few exceptions for tintypes or ambrotypes <sup>2</sup>.

Several models adopt a pose of “great man,” gazing into their imagined fate or fortune for their portraits. The Lincoln Enigma: Authentic Portrait or Skilled Impersonator?



• No name, G. W. Clark studio, Ionia, Michigan, c. 1865



• No name, Saylor, Reading, Pa., c. 1866

<sup>1</sup> Koerber, Susannah. “Whiskers for Votes, or Why Abraham Lincoln Grew a Beard,” Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites, 31 août 2021,

<https://www.indianamuseum.org/blog-post/whiskers-for-votes-or-why-abraham-lincoln-grew-a-beard/>



• Frank Russell, Lawrence, Mass.s c. 1868 (selfport.)



• No name, no place, c. 1865



• No name, no place, early 1860s



• G. L. Hurd, Providence, Rhode Island, c. 1865 (detail)

<sup>2</sup> “Taking Photographs During the Civil War,” Library of Congress, accessed 30 December 2024,

[www.loc.gov/collections/civil-war-glass-negatives/articles-and-essays/taking-photographs-during-the-civil-war/](https://www.loc.gov/collections/civil-war-glass-negatives/articles-and-essays/taking-photographs-during-the-civil-war/)

# A DAG THAT PREDATES LINCOLN'S FAME

Daguerreotype technology was largely superseded by newer photographic methods by the time of Lincoln's presidency. A visit to the Library of Congress offers insights into this transition through the Liljenquist Family Collection <sup>3</sup>, which provides a comprehensive view of Civil War-era photography.

This collection, now numbering over 7,000 items, primarily consists of ambrotypes, tintypes, and cartes de visite of individual soldiers and officers from both sides of the conflict. The family began donating their collection to the Library of Congress in 2010 and continues to add to it.

The collection's focus on these newer photographic techniques (ambrotypes and tintypes) rather than daguerreotypes further illustrates the shift in photographic technology during this period. The Liljenquists specifically sought out high-quality portraits that capture compelling images of the soldiers, providing a rich resource for understanding the visual culture of the Civil War era (Library of Congress Press Release, November 2024).

Daguerreotypes were rarely created after Lincoln's inauguration and the start of the Civil War. The few exceptions are precious copy-dags made following official sessions that created portraits on paper, at least one at Lincoln's request.

The challenge is to solve this riddle: the man in the daguerreotype resembles Abraham Lincoln even before his image became widespread. The simplest explanation is often correct:

Who was the first man to resemble Abraham Lincoln?

Was it not Abraham Lincoln himself?

Iconographers who have cataloged all portraits of Abraham Lincoln before his election and during his presidency assert that there is at least one image whose existence is certain but missing—a daguerreotype taken during his train journey when he was transforming his image by growing a beard and changing his attire.

Our investigation now turns to the presidential inauguration train, its pivotal stop in Clyde on 18 February 1861, and the confluence of circumstances that may have led to this potentially historic portrait.

Who was behind the camera?

Who commissioned it?

And why has it remained hidden for so long?



• *Daguerreotypes in Decline: Lincoln's Image in a Changing Photographic Era, Library of Congress, november 2024*

<sup>3</sup> Liljenquist Family Collection of Civil War Photographs, Library of Congress, accessed 30 December 2024,

<https://www.loc.gov/collections/liljenquist-civil-war-photographs/about-this-collection/>





• James F. Ryder, *Atlantic and Great Western Railway* (detail), albumen print, 1862, William Schaeffer collection, Metropolitan Museum, illustrating Ted Widemer conference, Stieglietz Society, January 2021. It was common for convoys to change locomotives or cars during the journey, as the railway network in 1860/1861 was not yet fully developed and had many differences in track gauge, among other things.

• VII •

## MOMENTOUS 1861 INAUGURAL JOURNEY

- *1,900 Miles in 12 Days*
- *Special Presidential Train Composition*
  - *Sleeping Car for the President*
  - *Rear Platform of the Train*
- *A Time-Card Detailed Schedule of the Journey*
- *A Hotel Register Provides a Passenger List*
  - *Victor Searcher's Account*
- *John Fagant's Research Contributions*

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# 1,900 MILES IN 12 DAYS

The route chosen for the journey to Washington was a somewhat circuitous one, traversing the States of Indiana, Ohio, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, and passing through Maryland to the District of Columbia. It seems to have been the desire of Mr. Lincoln to meet personally the people of the great Northern States, upon whose devotion and loyalty he prophetically felt he must depend for the salvation of the Republic. Everywhere he met the warmest and most generous greetings from the throngs assembled at the railway stations in the various cities...

*“Although any President-elect’s journey to Washington would receive its fair share of coverage and the public’s fascination, Lincoln’s cross-country passage was more than that. His journey took on a whole new level of significance as it was an extraordinary and unique event of singular importance. The country was in the midst of a crisis it had never before experienced and an ordeal that none were sure how to resolve... Seven southern states had already seceded from the Union. Several more were threatening to do so. Yet Lincoln had been silent and out of the public eye since his election three months earlier. On this journey, he would finally be seen and heard. The public was now hoping to get answers to the questions they all had.*

*The response to the trip was overwhelming as the crowds along the way were enormous and enthusiastic. This was the opportunity of a lifetime for most people to see a President in person, and they came out in droves to see him...*

*New York State, however, played a considerable role in the journey. Almost half of the twelve nights, more than forty percent, were spent in the state’s cities – two nights in Buffalo, one in Albany and two more in New York City. In 1860, New York State, with a population of 3.8 million, was the largest state in the Union. However, New York State was more than just New York City. The completion of the Erie Canal in 1825, followed closely by the railroad expansions, opened up the interior of the country to development. Immigrants flocked not only to the frontier lands but also into central and western New York. Buffalo, sitting on the shores of Lake Erie, was the terminus for the Canal. In just a few short years it was transformed from a crude frontier village into a strong, vibrant city and the most important port on the Great Lakes.*

*By 1835, Rochester, Syracuse and Utica had tripled their population. New York City, already a major port in the country, became the financial, commercial, insurance and manufacturing center for the country and the world. New York State had truly become ‘The Empire State’... In 1918, the Canal was replaced by the New York State Barge Canal. Many abandoned sections (most notably between Rochester and Rome) have been filled in to create roads such as Columbia street in Clyde, NY.”<sup>1,2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Fagant, John. *“The Best of the Bargain: Lincoln’s Journey to Washington.”* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2010

<sup>2</sup> Morrison, Wayne E. *“Morrison’s History of Clyde, Wayne Co., New York.”* 5<sup>th</sup> edition, 1980



• Itinerary designed by William Wood

• Clyde, NY



• Relief Map of New York State, the train will follow the historical waterway and canal route.



# SPECIAL TRAIN COMPOSITION

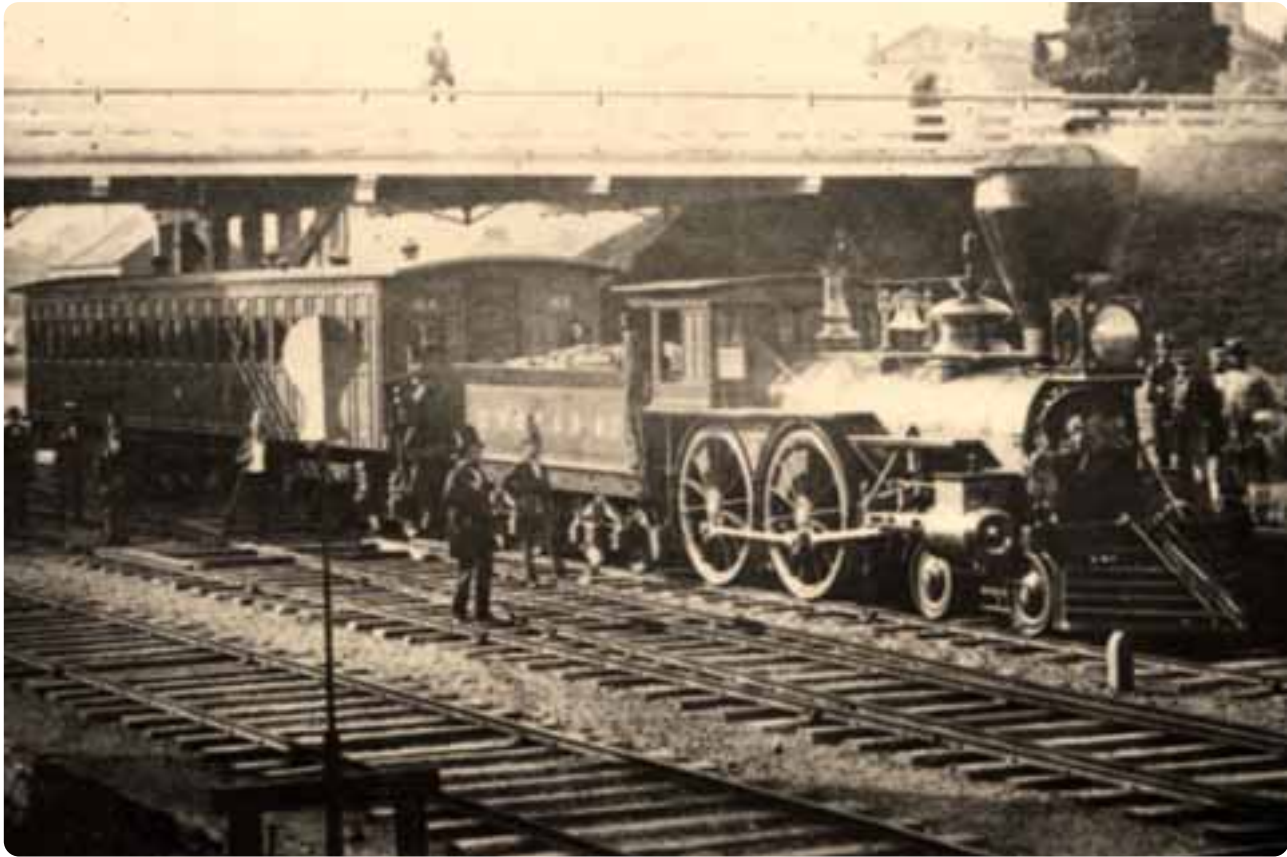
Lincoln would ride in a brand-new elegant ... *“tastefully furnished and decorated”* sleeping car equipped with an *“improved ventilator,”* and pulled by swiftest and most modern locomotive. As for the route, as the record shows, it was inspired by political obligations and Lincoln’s own hunger to be seen by the public from whom he had been separated for so many months.

Initially, William Wood proved a thorough, if somewhat overzealous, organizer. First he personally surveyed the complex array of railroad lines over which the presidential special would ride on the circuitous trip from Springfield to Washington. Knowing better than most that the nation’s rapidly expanding rail systems were still dizzyingly incompatible in terms of track gauge, equipment, even local time zone, Wood successfully chose a route that offered Lincoln ample time for full exposure in major cities without delaying his arrival in Washington...

*“Cambridge City Indiana January 26. 1861. Hon. Abraham Lincoln, Dear Sir, I have been requested by Mr. Newman Prest. Indiana Central Rail Road Co. and other Rail Road officers, who have control of the different Rail Road lines leading from Lafayette via Indianapolis to Pittsburgh Pa. to advise you that they have completed an arrangement by which, they desire to tender you a special train of cars on that line to run at such time as will suit your convenience. One car to be set apart for yourself and suit free of charge. They suppose you would prefer passing over the route in daylight, that your friends may have an opportunity of taking you by the hand at the different stations on the line. There is no portion of the great North West, wherein you have more devoted friends than in Indiana, and in the line of Road over which you would pass, should you visit our State.*

*I sincerely hope we may have the pleasure of greeting you “the peoples Choice” at our State Capitol, on your way to Washington City. With my best wishes for your success personally and the success of your (.../...) Administration I remain Your friend Sol. Meredith”*<sup>3</sup>

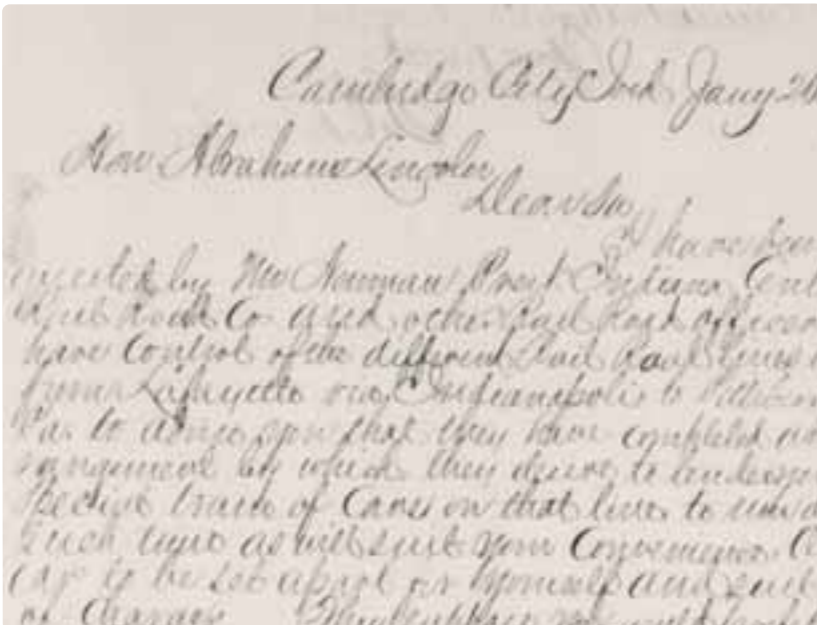
*“Buffalo to Rochester. The New York Central Railroad Company was now in charge of providing travel accommodations. The “Dean Richmond” locomotive would carry the President-elect to Rochester. Dean Richmond was the Vice-President of the New York Central and, ironically, the State Chairman for the Democratic Party. Lincoln, elected on the Republican Party line, was being pulled across the state by a locomotive named after one of New York State’s leading Democrats. That is exactly how Lincoln would have wanted it to be. He wished to be considered President of the whole United States, not President of the Republican Party.”*<sup>4</sup>



President Lincoln's inaugural journey has often been compared to the Prince of Wales' visit to the US and Canada in Summer and Fall 1860. This photograph of the Train Conveying The Prince Of Wales in upper Canada (conserved in the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick) offers an idea of what the Special train used by President Lincoln may have been like.



• Interior of a Pullman Coach, 1877



• Solomon Meredith's letter to Abraham Lincoln, January 26, 1861

<sup>3</sup> Solomon Meredith to Abraham Lincoln, 26 January 1861, *The Abraham Lincoln Papers* at the Library of Congress.

<sup>4</sup> Wolly, Brian. “Lincoln’s Whistle-Stop Trip to Washington.” *Smithsonian Magazine*, 9 February 2011  
<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/lincolns-whistle-stop-trip-to-washington-161974/>



# SLEEPING CAR FOR THE PRESIDENT

From the start of the journey to Utica, and in particular on the morning of Monday, February 18, the train consisted of three cars:

1. A baggage car, partially fitted as a smoking car, connected to the locomotive.
2. A “*commodious and neatly arranged passenger coach*” for committee members, Governor Morgan’s escort, and press from various cities.
3. A sleeping car for Lincoln and his family in the rear, “*gorgeously fitted up with sofas, centre tables, mirrors and carpets.*”

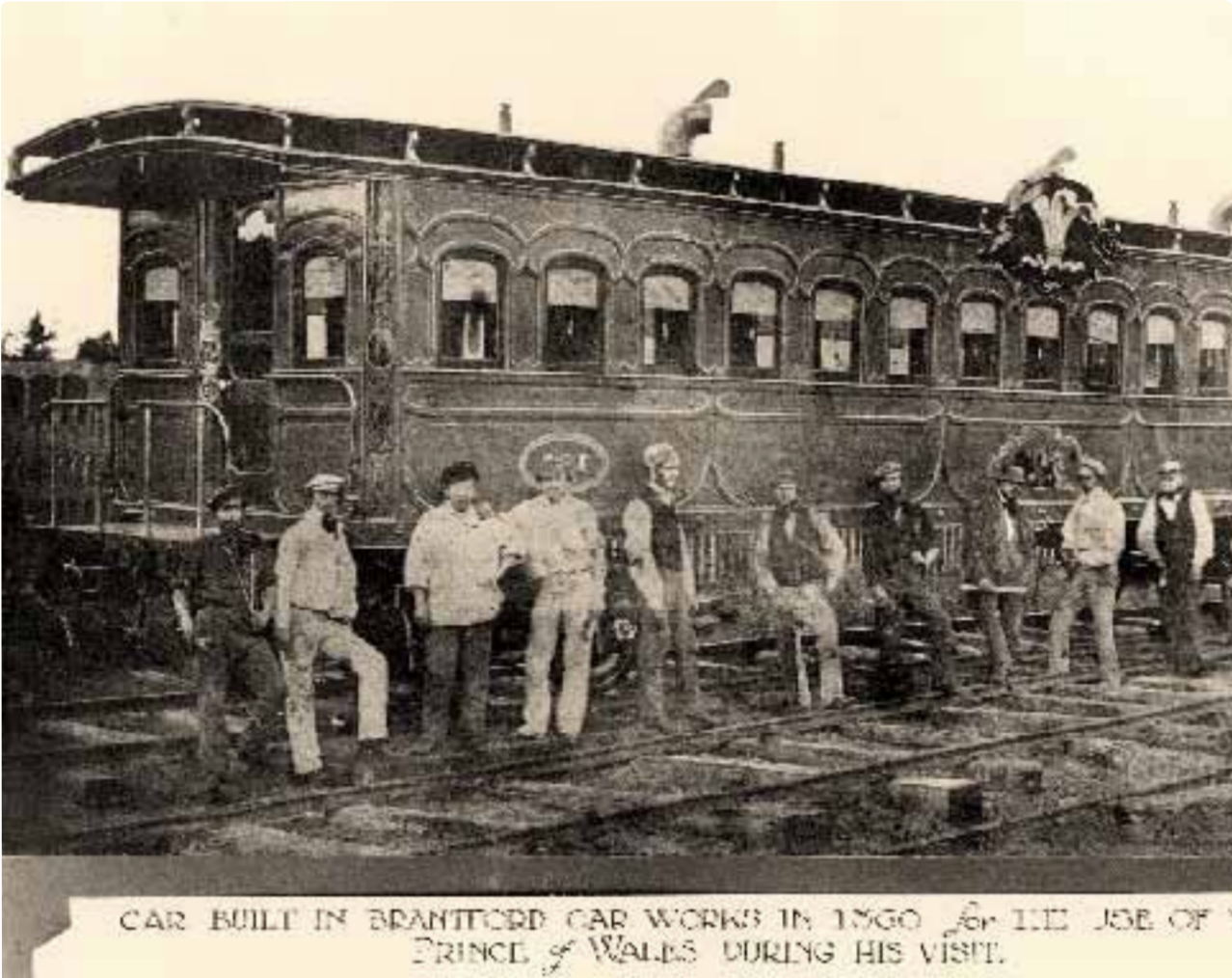
The Buffalo Express noted: “*Over the State Line and Central roads the President elect will experience almost as much luxury in his travel as was enjoyed by the Prince of Wales last fall.*”

Some sources were more specific: “*Lincoln is traveling in car used few months previously by the Prince of Wales.*”<sup>5</sup> (Robert S. Harper). This car, built in Brantford, Ontario for the Prince of Wales’ 1860 visit to Canada, was well-documented:

“*The exterior of the car, which is 46 feet long by 10 feet wide, presents a splendid appearance. The car has a double roof for the purpose of thorough ventilation, the upper one being supported by beautifully cut gilt brackets. The window frames are made of handsome Canadian oak, and are richly varnished. The handrails are of burnished brass, and rest upon polished oak tracks, which, with the iron work, are painted with the utmost skill and elegance.*

*The inside of the car is chaste, tasteful and elegant... It is divided into three compartments, an ante-room 8 feet 6 inches by 6 feet, a stateroom 28 feet by 8 feet 6 inches, and a retiring room, all furnished in the same style. The first is the anteroom, provided with two handsome lounges, and two novel but prettily formed and painted refrigerators... The window curtains are of fine Canary silk, mounted on patent spring rollers and having silk tassels, by the slightest pull of which one can raise or lower the curtains at pleasure, and with the most perfect ease.*

*The ventilation has been well provided for. The two roofs allow a full free current of air to pass between them and over the patent, double-coned drum ventilators, of which there are two in the stateroom, and one in the anteroom. The double cone prevents any dust or sparks from descending into the cars, through the funnels of the ventilators, and is a most admirable arrangement...*”<sup>6</sup> (Toronto Star).



• The first sleeping-car, buil by Buffalo and Lake Huron Railway for the Prince of Wales and refurbished for Abraham Lincoln

Mr. William Wood, Superintendent of Arrangements for the journey, had addressed the issue of overcrowding earlier: “*Serious inconvenience has already been occasioned by the unnecessary number of Committeemen who throng the cars – three gentlemen being able to do the work more efficiently than twenty, which is the usual number. Two cars will compose the special train hereafter. No change whatever will be made to the programme now adopted, and a thoughtful attention to these suggestions will contribute greatly to the comfort and health of Mr. Lincoln, who is physically far from adequate to the demands made upon his strength.*”

The train departed Buffalo at 5:45 in the morning on Monday, February 18, with newspaper man Horace Greeley onboard.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Harper, Robert S. “*Lincoln and the Press.*” 1951, p. 85  
<sup>6</sup> *Toronto Star*, Tuesday 17 March 1936, and Saturday 22 March 1936. Searchable in the *Toronto Star's* digital archives via ProQuest Historical Newspapers or Newspapers.com

<sup>7</sup> Wolly, Brian. “*Lincoln’s Whistle-Stop Trip to Washington.*”





# REAR PLATFORM OF THE TRAIN

From the beginning of the journey to Utica, President-elect Abraham Lincoln routinely addressed brief speeches from the platform of his train car to the crowds gathered along the tracks, particularly in small towns. This practice allowed him to avoid navigating through dense crowds, especially given numerous warnings about potential threats along the route.

During the daytime, Mr. William Wood, who was responsible for managing Lincoln's itinerary, would stand on the platform and introduce visitors to Lincoln, who remained on the train. The rear platform became a focal point for Lincoln's public appearances during the eleven-day journey.

*"The stop at Clyde, a port on the Erie Canal, was short but well-attended. The New York Tribune reported: "At Clyde an enthusiastic crowd was gathered, who welcomed Mr. Lincoln with a salute and cheers. He thanked the people for the welcome, but had no speech to make, and no time to make it in. He was glad to see them, and bade them good morning." Lincoln went back in the sleeping car. "According to Searcher, "The editor of the local paper pushed up to the platform and told Lincoln he had been deputized by the people to shake hands, then distribute the handshake in tomorrow's edition. Saying it was a fine idea, Lincoln shook hands heartily."*<sup>8</sup>

*Mr. Lincoln's remarks from a platform Syracuse were more extensive. They were delivered in front of the Globe Hotel: "I see you have erected a very fine and handsome platform here for me and I presume you expected me to speak from it. If I should go upon it you would imagine that I was about to deliver you a much longer speech than I am. I wish you to understand that I mean no discourtesy to you by thus declining. I intend discourtesy to no one. But I wish you to understand that though I am unwilling to go upon this platform, you are not at liberty to draw any inferences concerning any other platform with which my name has been or is connected. [Laughter and applause.] I wish you a long life and prosperity individually, and pray that with the perpetuity of those institutions under which we have all so long lived and prospered, our happiness may be secured, our future made brilliant, and the glorious destiny of our country established forever. I bid you a kind farewell."*<sup>8,9</sup>

The rear platform was indeed central to Lincoln's interactions with the public. Mr. Wood managed introductions and appointments from the platform. *"Lincoln devised another clever stratagem for handling demands for a speech. He would remain inside until the conductor of the train should notify him that he was ready to start, so that when Mr. Lincoln stepped out of the door only time would be left to make two or three bows in different directions when the moving train would bear him away from his enthusiastic admirers while he was standing, hat in hand, upon the platform."*<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> "Buffalo to Albany, February 18, 1861," Mr. Lincoln and New York, accessed 30 December 2024

<https://www.mrlincolnannewyork.org/mr-lincolns-visits/buffalo-to-albany-february-18-1861/index.html>

<sup>9</sup> Searcher, Victor. "Lincoln's Journey to Greatness." Philadelphia John C. Winston Co., 1960

<sup>10</sup> Nicolay, "Some Incidents in Lincoln's Journey," Burlingame, ed., Oral History of Lincoln, 113



• Platform of the original sleeping car, Summer 1860



• A. L. standing on the platform, drawn from memory in 1886



• Detail of a February 1861 newspaper, Springfield



• 1880 sleeping-car platform with 4 men (Stiers photg.)

The platform has two or 3 steps on each side for climbing or descending. A brakeman would be present to operate the brakes for departure. The rail transport assisting the braking of the special train during the stoppings by applying brakes on individual wagons, especially the rear car.



# TIME-CARD WITH DETAILED SCHEDULE

The meticulous planning of President-elect Lincoln’s journey from Springfield to Washington was evident in the detailed schedule prepared by William S. Wood, the Superintendent of Arrangements. This schedule was efficiently distributed to the press in the days leading up to the Lincoln family’s departure, along with an authorized list of the *traveling party, which Wood elegantly referred to as* “the Family and suite.” On 18 Feb. 1861, the train’s engine was replaced at Rochester with No. 84, operated by engineer John Duff. <sup>1, 2, 3, 4</sup>

The local historians’ association’s preservation of a pink paper printout of the Time Card indicates the historical significance attached to this journey even at the local level. The train’s progress was carefully timed and recorded:

- Palmyra: 8.16 AM
- Newark: 8.26 AM
- Lyons: 8.35 AM
- Arrived in Clyde: 8.44 AM
- Departed Clyde: 8.49 AM
- Port Byron: 9.11 AM

The stop in Clyde was scheduled to last exactly five minutes for wood and water replenishment.

**Observations and Speculations.** For a Daguerreian artist to capture Lincoln’s image in Clyde, considerable premeditation would have been required:

- Approximately one hour needed to prepare the plate
- The plate would remain usable for only about an hour
- The artist likely began polishing the plate around 7.20 AM
- A 15-20 minute walk from the gallery to the station, considering icy conditions

This meticulously planned schedule not only facilitated Lincoln’s journey but also allowed for precise coordination of public appearances along the route. Interestingly, no photographs of the train have ever been found, which underscores the exceptional and unique nature of Clyde’s local photographer’s initiative. His effort to capture Lincoln’s image during this brief stop stands out as a remarkable moment in the photographic documentation of this historic journey.

<sup>1</sup> Searcher, Victor. “Lincoln’s Journey to Greatness: A Factual Account of the Twelve-Day Inaugural Trip.” Philadelphia: John C. Winston, 1960, p. 143-144

<sup>2</sup> Wolly, Brian. “Lincoln’s Whistle-Stop Trip to Washington.” *Smithsonian Magazine*, 9 February 2011  
<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/lincolns-whistle-stop-trip-to-washington-161974/>

<sup>3</sup> “Buffalo to Albany, February 18, 1861.” Mr. Lincoln and New York. Accessed 30 December 2024  
<https://www.mrlincolnannewyork.org/mr-lincolns-visits/buffalo-to-albany-february-18-1861/index.html>

<sup>4</sup> Morrison, Wayne E. “Morrison’s History of Clyde, Wayne Co., New York.” 5<sup>th</sup> edition, 1980

The New York Central Railroad.			
TIME CARD			
FOR A SPECIAL TRAIN, FEBRUARY 18, 1861.			
WITH			
Hon. Abraham Lincoln, President-Elect.			
Arrive	Rochester	7.35	A. M.
Leave	Rochester	7.40	”
Passed	Fairport	7.52	”
”	Palmyra	8.16	”
”	Newark	8.26	”
”	Lyons	8.35	”
Arrive	Clyde	8.44	”
Leave	Clyde	8.49	”
Passed	Port Byron	9.11	”
”	Jordan	9.22	”
Arrive	Syracuse	9.52	”
Leave	Syracuse	10.05	”



# LINCOLN’S TRAVELING COMPANIONS

The journey of President-elect Abraham Lincoln from Springfield to Washington in February 1861 was a significant event, accompanied by a diverse group of individuals. Based on the information provided from Villard’s *Memoirs*<sup>1</sup> and John Fagant’s research<sup>2</sup>, we can compile a comprehensive list of Lincoln’s traveling companions:

Lincoln Family

- Abraham Lincoln
- Mary Todd Lincoln (“Lady”)
- Robert T. Lincoln (eldest son, age 17)
- Willie Lincoln (age 10)
- Tad Lincoln (age 7)
- Elizabeth Todd (cousin Lizzie Grimsley)
- William Johnson (servant)

Political Associates and Friends

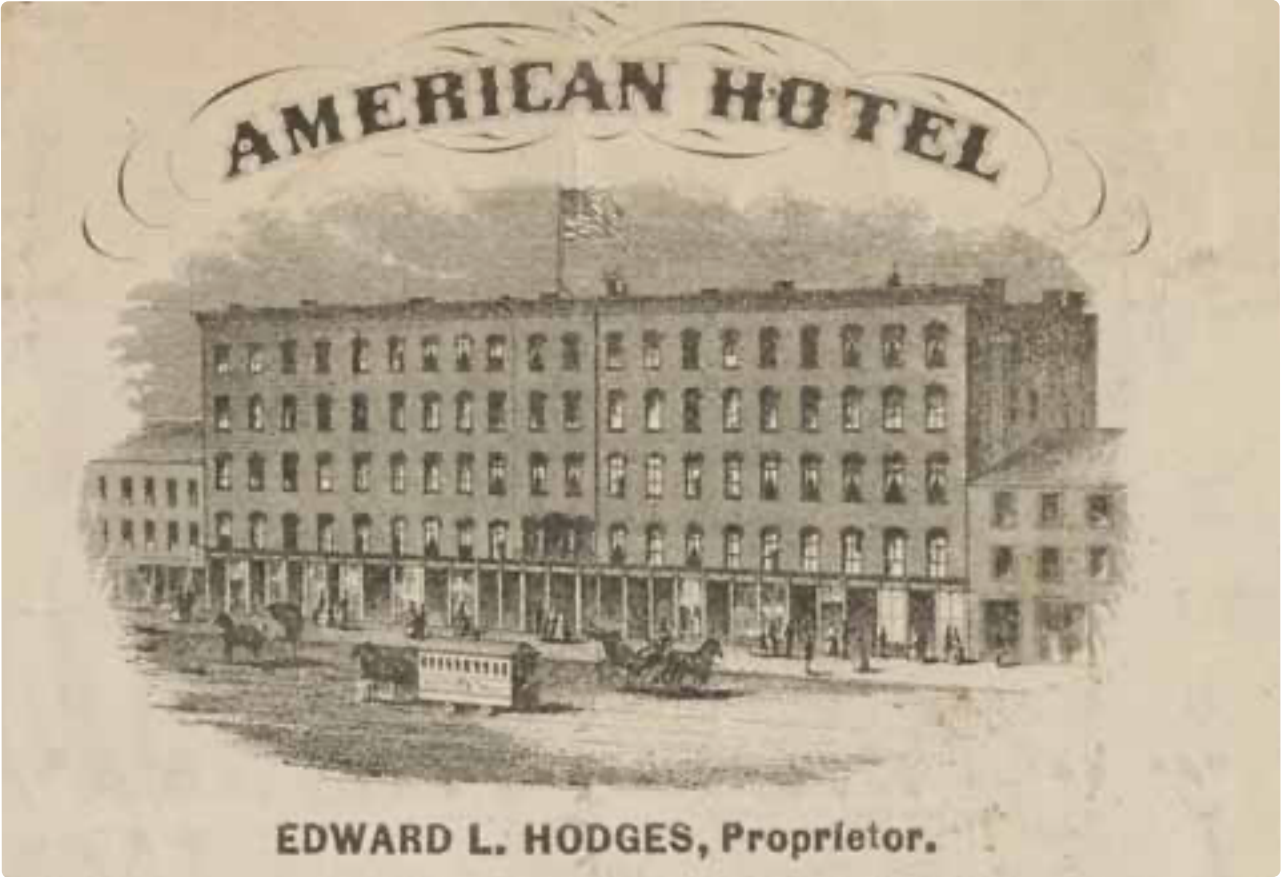
- Norman B. Judd (Illinois Republican Party leader)
- Judge David Davis (Illinois Circuit Court Judge)
- Ward Hill Lamon (Lincoln’s friend and bodyguard)
- Dr. W. S. Wallace (Lincoln’s personal physician and brother-in-law)
- Lockwood Todd (relative of Mrs. Lincoln)

Staff

- John G. Nicolay (Lincoln’s private secretary)
- John Hay (Assistant secretary)
- W. S. Wood (Superintendent of Arrangements for the journey)

Military Escort

- Colonel Edwin Vose Sumner (U.S. Army)
- Major David Hunter (U.S. Army)
- Captain John Pope (U.S. Army)
- Captain George Hazard (U.S. Army)
- Colonel E. E. Ellsworth (famous “Zouave” militia leader)



• Bill of fare for American Hotel. Buffalo, in the time of Lincoln inaugural Journeyl. Courtesy University of Houston

Journalists from various newspapers were present, including representatives from:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| • <i>The New York Times</i>                   | • <i>New York Tribune</i>              |
| • <i>New York World</i>                       | • <i>New York Herald</i>               |
| • <i>Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper</i> | • <i>Philadelphia Inquirer</i>         |
| • <i>Cincinnati Gazette</i>                   | • <i>Chicago Tribune</i>               |
| • <i>Cleveland Dealer</i>                     | • <i>Associated Press</i>              |
| • <i>Western Telegraph Company</i>            | • <i>Rochester Democrat and Union</i>  |
| • <i>Syracuse Journal and Democrat</i>        | • <i>Wayne County Lyons Republican</i> |

It’s important to note that the composition of the group may have varied slightly during the 12-day journey, with some individuals joining or leaving at different points. The research will focus on whether any of these individuals commented on Lincoln’s appearance or the impromptu photographic session at Clyde on 18 February 1861.

<sup>1</sup> Villard, Henry. *“Memoirs of Henry Villard, Journalist and Financier, 1835-1900,”* Boston and New York ; Houghton, Mifflin, 1904, volume 1, p.150

<sup>2</sup> Fagant, John. *“The Best of the Bargain: Lincoln’s Journey to Washington.”* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2010. John Fagant published the list of names he found in the Buffalo “American Hotel” registrar for the night the presidential suite rested on Saturday, 16 February 1861. It indicates the repartition in the rooms. "A. Lincoln and Lady", "Two children and servant", "Robert T. Lincoln (son of Mr. Lincoln)"

## VICTOR SEARCHER'S ACCOUNT

Victor Searcher was a notable Lincoln scholar who made significant contributions to our understanding of Lincoln's inaugural journey. His work provides valuable insights into the events and details of this historic trip.

In 1960, he authored the book *"Lincoln's Journey to Greatness,"*<sup>1</sup> which offers a detailed account of the inaugural train journey.

Searcher's work included details about Lincoln's staff, noting that William Johnson, a servant, accompanied Lincoln from Springfield to Washington with the intention of joining the White House staff. Searcher wrote that *"William emerged from the baggage car carrying a handsome broadcloth over-coat and a hat box. The exchange was made, and the press reported that Lincoln's appearance improved fifty per cent thereby."*

Searcher provided colorful anecdotes about Lincoln's interactions during the trip. For example, he recounted how *"The next halt was at the important canal port of Clyde. All boats being iced in, the population turned out en masse. The editor of the local paper pushed up to the platform and told Lincoln he had been deputized by the people to shake hands, then distribute the handshake in tomorrow's edition. Saying it was a fine idea, Lincoln shook hands heartily - This is M. Pain, the unlucky reporter - While this was going on an enterprising artist set up a camera on a wood pile and took pictures reported the New York Times and the Buffalo Express..."*

*To the author's knowledge this Lincoln Photograph has never come to light... Any information about the Clyde pictures should be addressed to the author in care of the publisher."*<sup>2</sup>

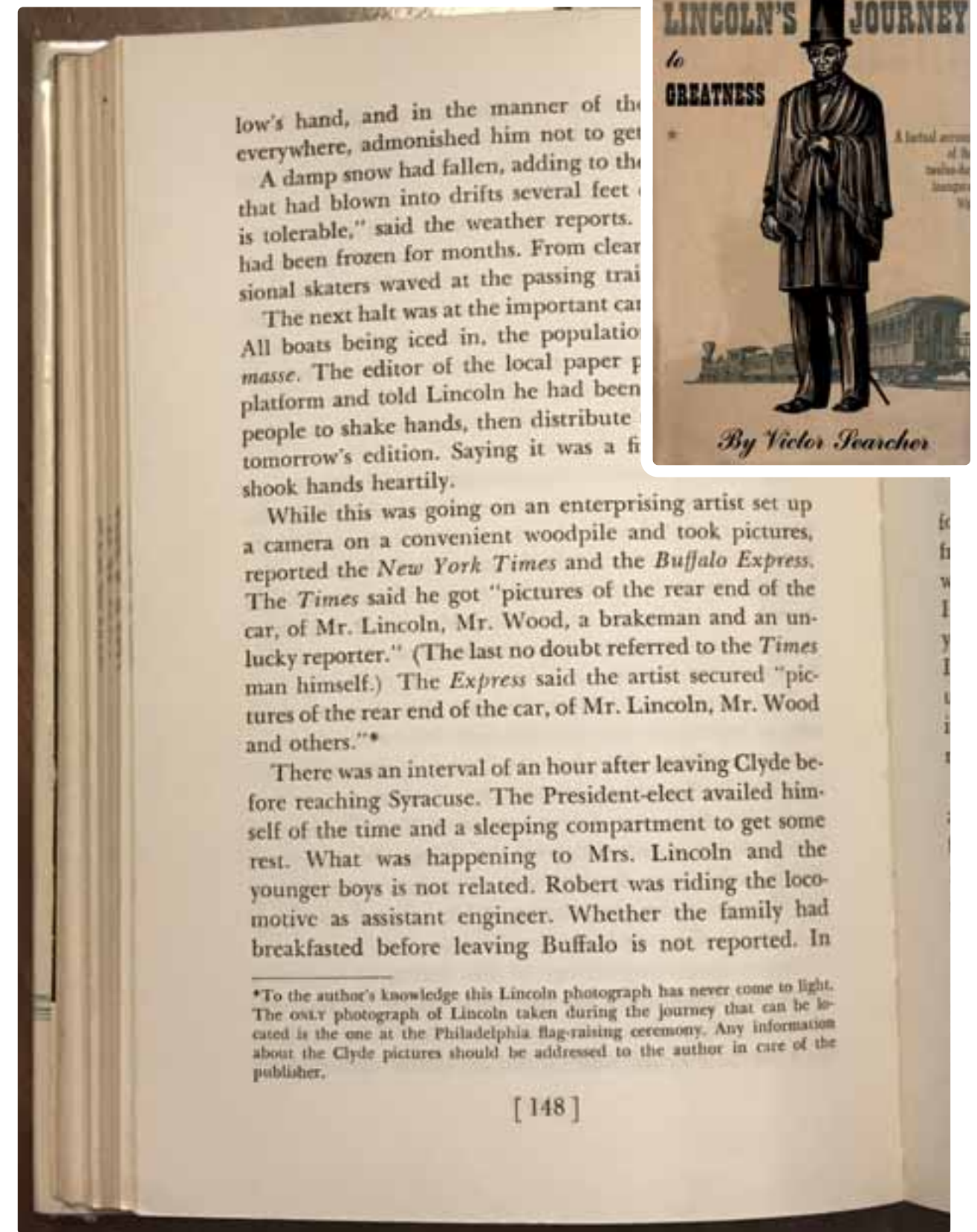
**\*To the author's knowledge this Lincoln photograph has never come to light. The ONLY photograph of Lincoln taken during the journey that can be located is the one at the Philadelphia flag-raising ceremony. Any information about the Clyde pictures should be addressed to the author in care of the publisher.**

[ 148 ]

• Victor Searcher, *Lincoln's Journey to Greatness, a factual account of the twelve-day inaugural trip*, 1960, page 148

<sup>1</sup> Searcher, Victor. "Lincoln's Journey to Greatness: A Factual Account of the Twelve-Day Inaugural Trip." Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Company, 1960

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 148





# JOHN FAGANT'S CONTRIBUTIONS

John Fagant's research provides valuable insights into Lincoln's inaugural journey, particularly the stop in Clyde, New York. His 2010 work, *"The Best of the Bargain,"*<sup>1</sup> offers detailed accounts of the events and their historical context.

*"Following along the Erie Canal region of the state, the Special train slowed down as it passed through the depots in the villages of Fairport, Palmyra, Newark and Lyons. At 8.44 AM, the train arrived at the scenic and important Erie Canal village of Clyde for a brief five-minute stop."*

Joseph Pain, editor of the *Clyde Weekly Times*, described the scene: "On Monday morning, bright and early, notwithstanding the heavy snow and deep drifts of Saturday night and Sunday morning, the roads in every direction were filled with teams and leads of human beings coming to see the President – elect. The village streets were thronged with vehicles, and by eight o'clock a large concourse of people were assembled at the depot, anxiously awaiting the Presidential train." Pain further recounted: "When Mr. Lincoln re-entered the car, we again got upon the platform and conversed with Mr. Wood during the short period occupied in wooding and watering. As soon as the locomotive whistled for starting, Mr. Lincoln stepped out upon the platform, and saying, — 'I bid you all farewell,' bowed several times to the crowd, who returned the greeting with enthusiastic cheers."<sup>2</sup>

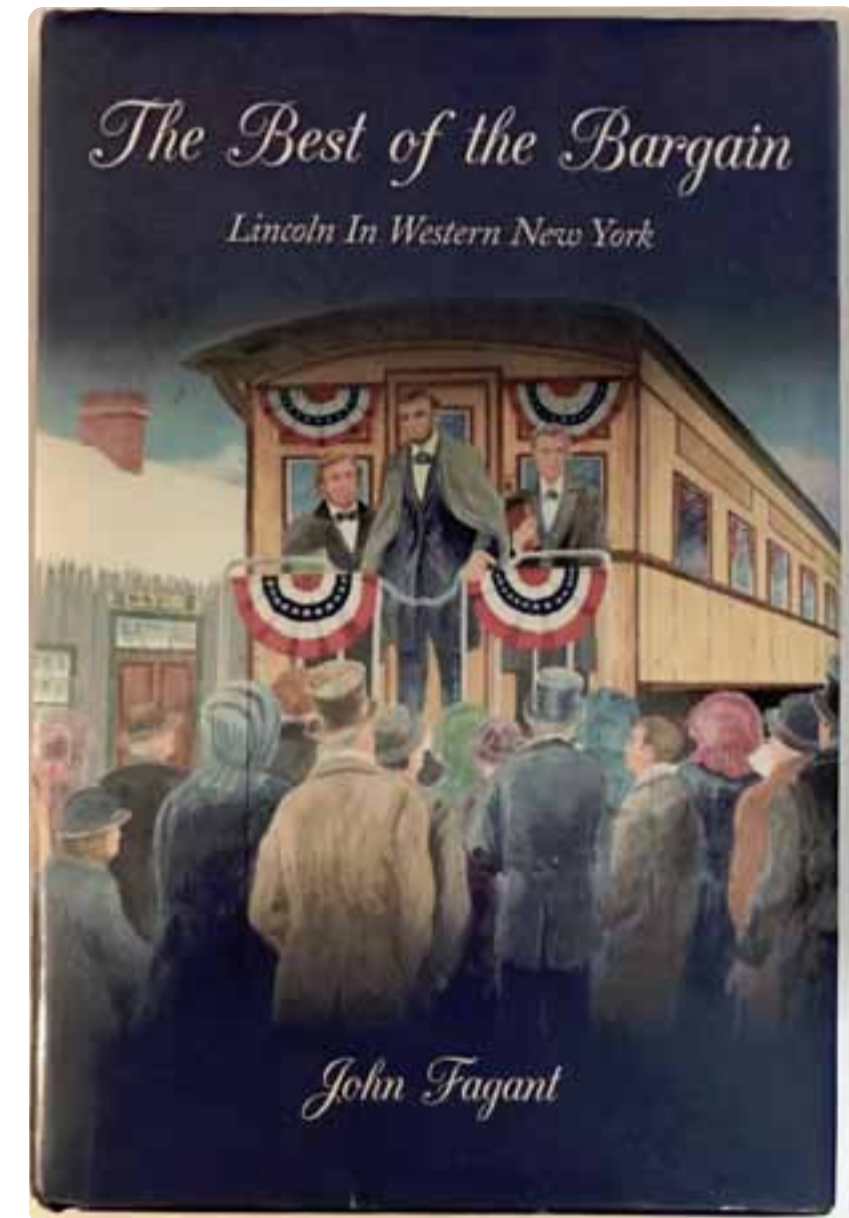
**The Photograph.** Fagant notes, "The only existing photograph of Lincoln during the twelve day Inaugural journey was taken at the Philadelphia flag raising ceremony on February 22nd. However, there was another photograph taken earlier in the trip and that was during the five minute stop at Clyde."

Three newspapers reported on this event: **The Buffalo Morning Express** (21 February 1861): "an enterprising artist had placed upon a convenient wood-pile a camera with which he secured pictures of the rear end of the car, of Mr. Lincoln, Mr. Wood and others."<sup>3</sup>

**The New York Times** (19 February 1861): "an enterprising artist had placed upon a convenient wood-pile a camera with which he secured pictures of the rear end of the car, of Mr. Lincoln, Mr. Wood a brakeman, and an unlucky reporter."<sup>4</sup>

**The Lyons Republican:** "A daguerreian artist had made preparations to daguerreaotype Mr. Lincoln, and asked that he might stand still on the platform of the car long enough to afford the opportunity."

Fagant suggests John B. Roberts of Clyde as a possible photographer, noting that Roberts had photographed Horace Greeley a few months earlier.



*"Despite the written evidence for its existence, the photograph has yet to make its way into the public eye. Was the photo ever developed, and, if so, is it in someone's private collection or even stashed away in someone's attic? Does John Roberts have any descendants who have any information on it? Whether it exists after all these years is still subject for conjecture.*

*A serious search for the photo is needed. This would be a fascinating project for an individual with a strong interest in Lincoln."*<sup>5</sup>

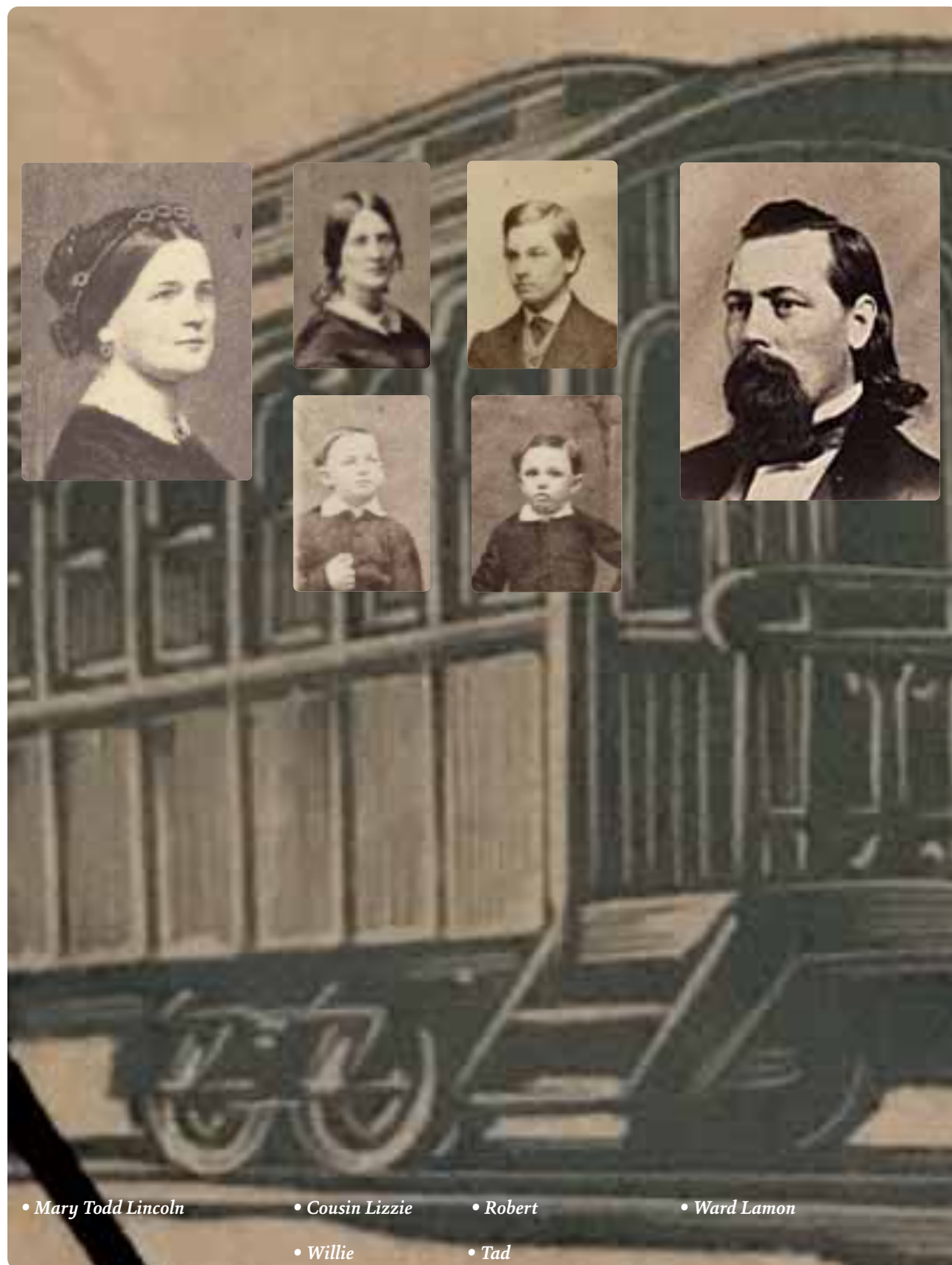
<sup>1</sup> Fagant, John. *"The Best of the Bargain: Lincoln's Journey to Washington."* Albany, NY: State Univ. of New York Press, 2010

<sup>4</sup> "Mr. Lincoln's Journey," *The New York Times*, 19 February 1861

<sup>2</sup> Pain, Joseph. *"Clyde Weekly Times,"* 23 February 1861.

<sup>5</sup> Fagant, John. *Ibid*, page 112

<sup>3</sup> *Buffalo Morning Express*, 21 February 1861



• VIII •

## PRESIDENTIAL TRAIN PASSENGERS LINCOLN FAMILY AND ENTOURAGE

- *Mary Todd Lincoln and children*
- *Elizabeth Todd Grimsley*
- *William Johnson, Lincoln's colored servant*
- *John G. Nicolay (Lincoln's private secretary)*
- *John Hay (Assistant secretary)*
- *Ward Hill Lamon, Lincoln's bodyguard*
- *William S. Wood, Train Manager*

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• MMXXV •



# MARY TODD LINCOLN AND CHILDREN

Mary Todd accompanied her husband with her sons, Robert, Willie and Tad on the inaugural journey from Springfield to Washington. More precisely, *“Mary Todd Lincoln and her two youngest sons joined the special train in Indianapolis, one day after leaving Springfield.”*<sup>1</sup>

At Buffalo on the night of Saturday, February 16, the American Hotel kept a record of the passengers’ distribution. In one room were *“Two children and servant”*: The two young boys were Willie, age 10, and Tad, age 7. The servant was a young African-American man named William Johnson.

Mary Todd doesn’t seem to be directly involved in the episode that occurred in the morning in Clyde, NY, at the unusual photo session, especially if we assume that her husband was photographed without a tie. Perhaps the impromptu was so rapid and quick she could not react in time.

However, she appears to realize at that moment the importance of the image of her husband, the president-elect, and to modify it before arriving in the elegant city of New York. The journalists on board the train report what happens in the next hours when Mrs. Lincoln decides to improve her husband’s physical appearance.

The *New York Times* commented on Mary Todd Lincoln’s decisive interaction: *“During the entire trip Mr. Lincoln has worn a shocking bad hat, and a very thin over-coat. Shortly after leaving Utica, Mrs Lincoln gave an order to William...”*<sup>2</sup>

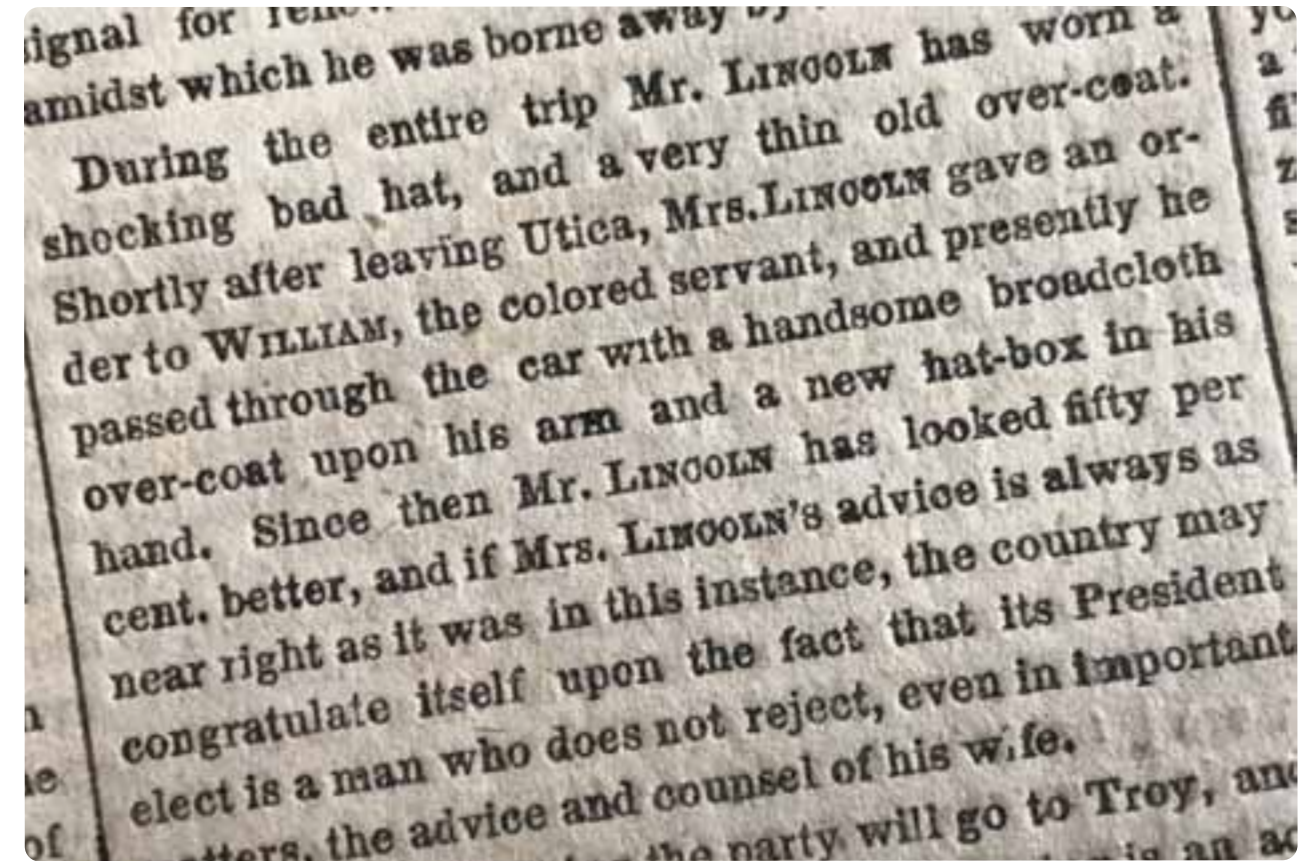
Enough was enough. She sent their servant, William Johnson, to the baggage compartment. He returned a few minutes later carrying a new hat box and a clean broadcloth over-coat.

All on the train felt that his appearance was improved by fifty percent. *“If Mrs. Lincoln’s advice is always as near right as it was in this instance, the country may congratulate itself upon the fact that its President elect is a man who does not reject, even in important matters, the advice and counsel of his wife.”*

The day after this incident, on 19 February 1861, Mr. Wood visited a chic tailor in Manhattan to order suits for the March 4th Inauguration in Washington.

<sup>1</sup> “Wolly, Brian. *“Lincoln’s Whistle-Stop Trip to Washington.”* *Smithsonian Magazine*, 9 February 2011  
<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/lincolns-whistle-stop-trip-to-washington-161974/>

<sup>2</sup> Howard, Joseph Jr. *“The Journey of the President Elect.”* *The New York Times*, 19 February 1861



• *The New York Times*, 19 February 1861. The article relates all moments of the previous day Monday, 18 February 1861



• Edward Anthony, *Mary Todd Lincoln, Willie and Tad*, 1861 (detail)



• *Mary Todd Lincoln*, ca.1861



# ELIZABETH TODD GRIMSLEY

Invited to Travel to Washington With the Lincolns. Cousin Lizzie Elizabeth was a bridesmaid at the wedding of her cousin Mary Todd and Abraham Lincoln in 1842. In February 1861, Elizabeth Todd Grimsley, “Cousin Lizzie,” was invited to travel to Washington, D. C. with Abraham and Mary Lincoln. She accepted the invitation. Her two boys, John age 13 and William age 8, stayed in Springfield with their grandparents, Dr. John and Elizabeth Todd.

She had been divorced since Halloween 1859, and had been living with her parents on South Sixth Street. Before he left for Washington, President-elect Lincoln gave Elizabeth Grimsley some of his important papers. Her maid subsequently burned many of them.

The day after Abraham Lincoln left Springfield, Mary Lincoln and two of her sons, Tadd and Willie, joined the President-elect in Indianapolis. Rather than traveling with Abraham from Springfield, Elizabeth Grimsley may have traveled with Mary and her two boys.

Elizabeth Grimsley was one of a number of Mary Lincoln’s relatives on board. Others included Mary’s sisters, Elizabeth Todd Edwards (Mrs. Ninian Edwards) and Margaret Todd Kellogg (Mrs. Charles Kellogg). It also included Edward L. Baker, editor of the Illinois State Journal, and his wife Julia, who was Ninian and Elizabeth’s daughter; Elizabeth Edwards, also a daughter of Ninian and Elizabeth; and Mrs. Clement B. White (Martha Todd).

The Lincolns left Albany at 7.45 AM and arrived at New York City’s 30<sup>th</sup> Street Station at 3 p.m. The Presidential Party occupied 11 carriages in a procession to the Astor House.

Mary Todd Lincoln was fond of her cousin: “*She is a noble, good woman & has been purified, through much trial.*” <sup>1</sup>

Mrs. Lincoln prevailed on her cousin to delay her departure from Washington as long as possible. “*Whenever I mention my return home Mary instantly objects,*” <sup>2</sup> she wrote cousin John Todd Stuart. Writing later about her six months in the White House, Mrs. Grimsley recalled how her duties came to include taking care of Willie and Tad, who contracted measles while visiting soldiers in their camps: “*The mother, always over-anxious and worried about the boys and withal not a skillful nurse, was totally unfitted for caring for them. They disliked their attendant maid, and by degrees, I was inveigled into the nursery, and by way of a pet name, was dubbed ‘Grandmother,’ though a younger woman than the mother.*” <sup>2</sup>

«The last week in February 1861, found a party of Illinoisans, eighteen or twenty in number domiciled in the comfortable old Metropolitan Hotel, New York, enroute to Washington, the ladies of this party being Mrs. Edwards, sister of Mrs. Lincoln, her two daughters, Mrs. Baker, and Miss Edwards, and myself, being invited guests to the White House.»

«The Presidential party had preceded us on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. The well-known story of Mr. Lincoln’s secret journey to the Capitol, the rumors of assassination, the peril of the President elect, and his safe arrival, were on every lip, and eagerly discussed from the various standpoints of interest, for or against.

At a table near ours, in the dining room, quite a party of New Yorkers were discussing the qualifications and fitness of the man for his position, “could he with any honor, fill the Presidential Chair?” “Would his western gaucherie disgrace the Nation:” and many other such questions. At length one gentleman, striking the table, with much emphasis exclaims, “Well! If nothing more is effected, it will help civilize the Illinoisans.»

«There were four army officers and eight or ten besides who were “Native,” and that rather roused our resentment. Did we not know of our charming Springfield society, composed of choice spirits gathered from many cultured, refined centers and could we not boast of many names even then prominent in political, intellectual life—our Douglas, Trumbull, Stuart, Logan, Baker, Hardin, Browning, Davis, Hay, Shields and Lincoln?»



On Saturday, 2 March 1861, the train from Springfield arrived in Washington, D. C.

All the family members were the Lincolns’ guests at the Willard Hotel until after the inauguration, and then several would stay at the White House. Mrs. Lincoln saw to it that everyone was comfortable.

The little clan would be a support to her as she navigated the unfamiliar rapids of Washington society and protocol.

Saturday night she held a reception for ladies at Willard’s, which the crème of Washington society avoided. According to Mrs. Howard Taft, who did show up that evening:

“The Lincolns were not welcome in the capital.”

<sup>1</sup> “Relatives and Residents: Elizabeth Todd Grimsley,” Mr. Lincoln’s White House, accessed 30 December 2024 <https://www.mrlincolnswhitehouse.org/residents-visitors/relatives-and-residents/relatives-residents-elizabeth-todd-grimsley/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth Todd Grimsley, “Six Months in the White House,” *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 19 (Oct.-Jan., 1926-1927): 43-44



# WILLIAM JOHNSON

William Henry Johnson (1833-1864) was, at the date of the inauguration, a 27 years old free African American serving as the personal valet and barber of Abraham Lincoln and accompanying him on the train to Washington, D.C. for his inauguration. During the journey, there was an alleged assassination conspiracy, and Lincoln traveled through Baltimore, Maryland, on a special train before finally arriving in Washington. Johnson was the only person from the Illinois entourage to travel with Lincoln in the middle of the night.

In Washington, Johnson was shunned and treated miserably by other White House servants, because they were not welcoming of newcomers, did not want a change in the established pecking order among staff, and disliked that he was a particularly dark-skinned African-American. President Lincoln sought other employment for Johnson only days after his inauguration, attesting that he was *“honest, faithful, sober, industrious and handy as a servant.”*<sup>1</sup> The President wrote also that *“The difference of color between him & other servants is the cause of our separation.”*<sup>2</sup>

So, Johnson held various jobs, including serving as Lincoln’s part-time valet and barber working as a messenger for the Treasury Department. If Lincoln needed Johnson’s assistance with errands or tasks, he would send a message to his supervisor, Samuel Yorke Atlee, at the Treasury. Johnson would shave and dress Lincoln before starting his workday at the Treasury.

In 1862, Johnson accompanied Lincoln to the Antietam Battlefield after the battle<sup>3</sup>. He also accompanied Lincoln on other trips, including to Gettysburg, where Lincoln delivered the Gettysburg Address. During this trip, Lincoln began experiencing symptoms of smallpox, which was spreading through Washington, D.C. at the time and had also affected Lincoln’s son, Tad. Johnson tended to Lincoln and became ill himself, being admitted to the hospital on 12 January 1864. He died a couple of weeks later. Lincoln used his own funds for Johnson’s funeral costs.

William Johnson is quoted by the New York Times as handling a black new suit and silk top hat to Abraham Lincoln on the morning of 18 February 1861. *“Mrs Lincoln gave an order to William, the colored servant, and presently he passed through the car with a handsome braodcloth over-coat upon his arm and a new hat box in his hand...”*<sup>4</sup>

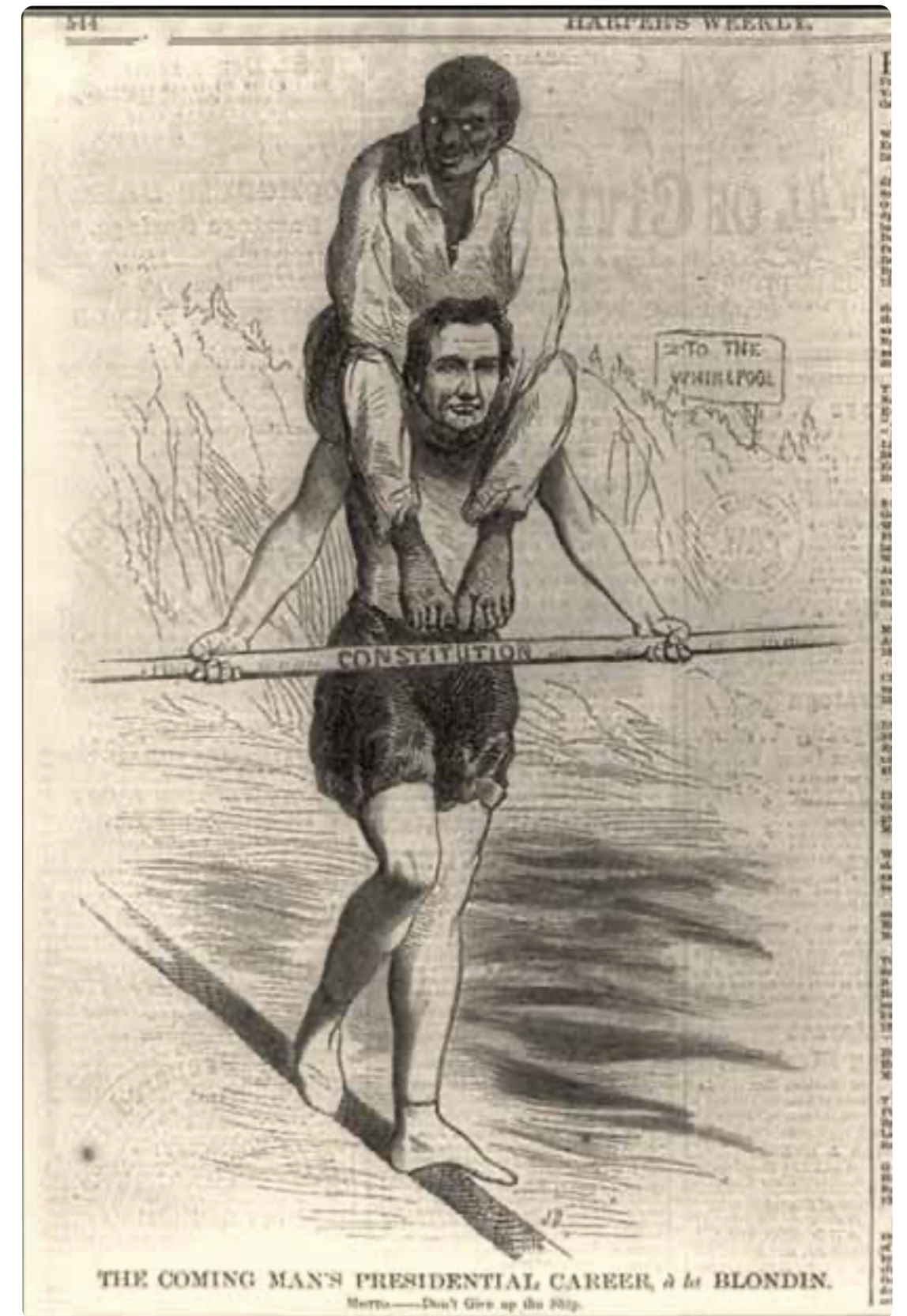
No portrait of William Johnson has been identified yet. One can mention a cartoon from August 1860, of Lincoln dressed as the famous tight-rope walker Blondin, crossing Niagara Falls carrying a young black man on his shoulders and *“Constitution”* as balancing pole.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “Whom it may concern. William Johnson, a colored boy, and bearer of this, has been with me about twelve months; and has been, so far, as I believe, honest, faithful, sober, industrious, and handy as a servant.” - Abraham Lincoln’s note of recommendation for William Johnson, 7 March 1861

<sup>2</sup> Abraham Lincoln in a letter to Navy Secretary Gideon Welles, 7 March 1861

<sup>3</sup> “William goes with me.” - Abraham Lincoln’s note to the Treasury Department regarding Johnson accompanying him to Gettysburg, 18 November 1863

<sup>4</sup> Howard, Joseph Jr. “The Journey of the President Elect.” The New York Times, 19 February 1861



<sup>5</sup> The Coming Man’s Presidential Career, Harper’s Weekly cartoon, August 1860 (Library of Congress)



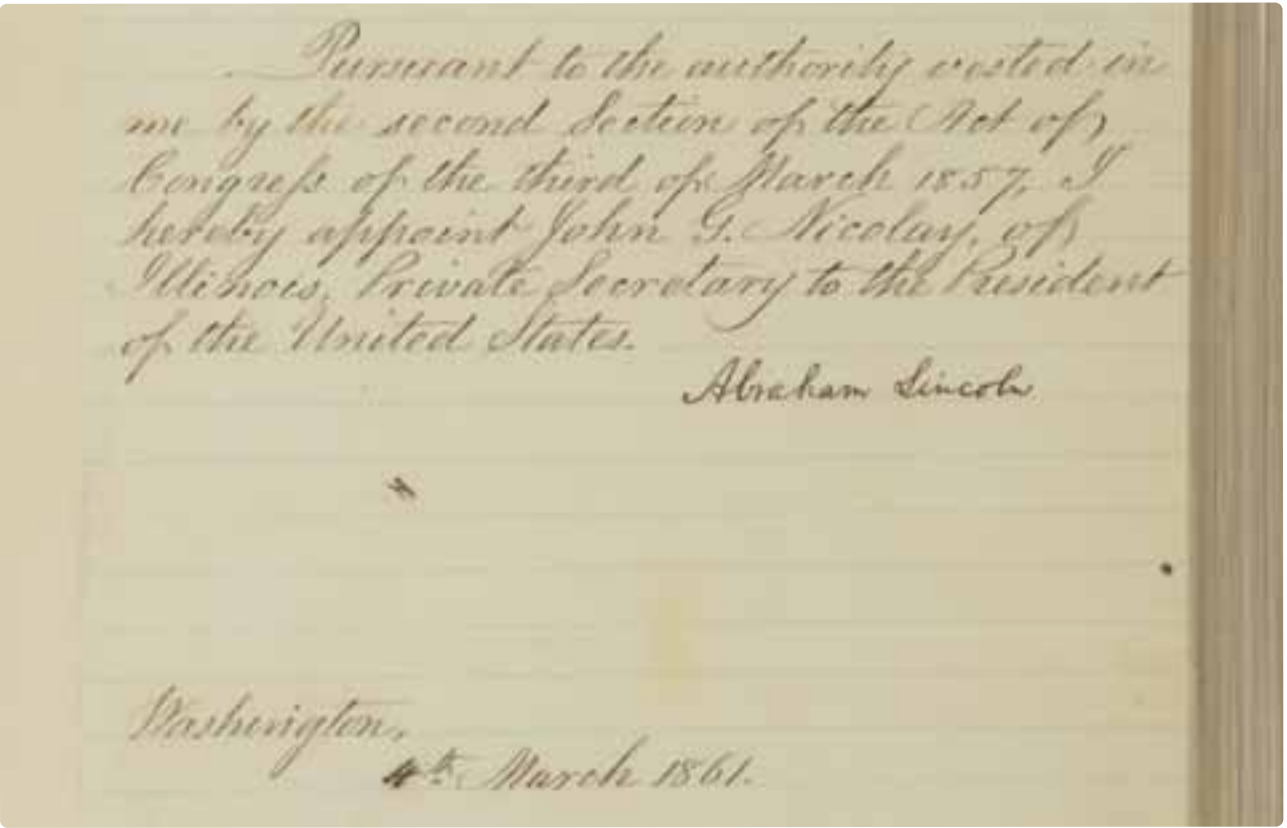
# JOHN G. NICOLAY

In order to depart for Albany at the scheduled time of 5.45 AM, the entourage arose at 4 o'clock on Monday, February 18. Nicolay recollected:

*“It was a grey, cold, dull winter morning, with snow on the ground. The spectral dawn outside, and gloom and ominous shadows dimly penetrated by a few feeble lamp-rays inside the depot gave an air of unreality to the muffled or flitting forms. Adding to the spooky effect were the clanging and hissing sounds that came back in hollow echoes from walls and arches.”*<sup>1</sup>

Lincoln devised a clever stratagem for handling demands for a speech. Nicolay explained:

*“He would remain inside until the conductor of the train should notify him that he was ready to start, so that when Mr. Lincoln stepped out of the door only time would be left to make two or three bows in different directions when the moving train would bear him away from his enthusiastic admirers while he was standing, hat in hand, upon the platform.”*<sup>1</sup>



• John Nicolay personal note-book



• Alexander Gardner, President Lincoln with private secretaries Nicolay and Hay Washington, D.C., 8 November 1863 (Lib of C.)

<sup>1</sup> Nicolay, John G. “Some Incidents in Lincoln’s Journey.” In *An Oral History of Abraham Lincoln: John G. Nicolay’s Interviews and Essays*, edited by Michael Burlingame. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1996



## JOHN MILTON HAY

Michael Burlingame edited anonymous and pseudonymous newspaper articles written by Lincoln's assistant personal secretary, John Milton Hay, between 1860 and 1864. In his demonstration, he qualified Hay's style as *"marked by long sentences, baroque syntactical architecture, immense vocabulary, verbal pyrotechnics, cocksure tone (combining acid contempt and extravagant praise), offbeat adverbs, and scornful adjectives."*

John Hay, who deeply resented having to awake so early, called down maledictions on the organizer of the trip, William S. Wood. The young secretary summarized the journey across the Empire State in three words – *"crowds, cannon, and cheers"* – and painted a composite picture of the day's images:

*"Such crowds – surging through long arches, cursing the military and blessing Old Abe; swinging hats, banners, handkerchiefs, and every possible variety of festival bunting, and standing with open mouths as the train, relentlessly punctual, moved away. The history of one is the history of all; depots in waves, as if the multitudinous seas had been let loose, and its billows transformed into patriots, clinging across roofs and balconies and pillars, fringing long embankments, swarming upon adjacent trains of motionless cars, shouting, bellowing shrieking, howling, all were boisterous; all bubbling with patriotism. The enthusiasm for the President was spontaneous and universal; and when we reached Albany, everybody present congratulated himself that he had been a witness of one of the most memorable of triumphal processions which this or any other country has ever witnessed."*<sup>1</sup>

John Hay wrote that it was *"impossible to describe the applause and the acclamation with which this Jacksonian peroration was greeted. The arches of the depot echoed and re-echoed with the ring of countless cheers. Men swung their hats wildly, women waved their handkerchiefs, and, as the train moved on, the crowd, animated by a common impulse, followed, as if they intended to keep it company to the next station. Inside the cars the enthusiasm created by the conclusion of the speech was scarcely less than the outside assemblage had exhibited. The company evinced a general disposition to intone hurrahs and sing patriotic songs out of tune."*<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hay, John. Albany correspondence, 18 February, New York World, 21 February 1861, Burlingame, ed., *Lincoln's Journalist: John Hay's Anonymous Writings for the Press, 1860 - 1864*, pp. 36-39

<sup>2</sup> Hay, John. Buffalo correspondence, 16 February, New York World, 19 February 1861, Burlingame, ed., *Lincoln's Journalist*, page 33



• Birstaed Brothers, John Hay in Washington, November 1861, Brown University Library

# WARD HILL LAMON

Ward Hill Lamon (1828-1893) was a close associate, friend, and protector of Abraham Lincoln for many years. While he did not directly participate in the photo session on 18 February 1861, he played a crucial role in several ways during Lincoln's inaugural journey:

Lamon blocked alarmist messages from Pinkerton that made the President-elect anxious from February 19 onwards.

He served as a liaison between train cars, informing journalists about events in the presidential car. It's possible he provided details about the daguerreotype to the *New York Times* journalist, who couldn't witness the entire session.

Lamon's relationship with Lincoln was long-standing. As Lincoln once confided to him, *"from boyhood up my ambition was to be President."* This ambition was noticed early by Mary Todd Lincoln, who reportedly said, *"He is to be President of the United States some day; if I had not thought so I never would have married him, for you can see he is not pretty."*<sup>1</sup>

During the inaugural journey, Lamon was part of the entourage described by himself: *"On the ninth of February, 1861, the arrangements for Mr. Lincoln's departure from Springfield were completed. It was intended to occupy the time remaining between that date and the 4th of March with a grand tour from State to State and city to city. Mr. Wood, 'recommended by Senator Seward,' was the chief manager. He provided special trains, to be preceded by pilot engines all the way through."*<sup>2</sup>

Lamon's protective nature often manifested physically. General James Harrison Wilson recalled an incident where Lamon struck a man who had painfully grasped Lincoln's hand. Lincoln's response was characteristically compassionate: *"For God's sake, Ward, give the man a chance! The next time you hit him, hit him with an axe handle!"*<sup>3</sup>

The inaugural journey marked a turning point. 18 February 1861, is noted as *"the last quiet day in Abraham Lincoln's life,"* with increasing security concerns emerging thereafter. Thanks to Ward Lamon, Lincoln could still present a confident and quiet facet to the public and the daguerreotypist on Monday 18 February morning.

Lamon's role as a self-appointed bodyguard continued throughout Lincoln's presidency, with the President often tempering Lamon's zealous protection with humor and compassion.



• Mr. Lincoln's departure from Springfield, published woodcut (Lib. of Congress) • B. P. Paige, Ward Lamon, Washington, 1861

*«On the 11th of February, 1861, the arrangements for Mr. Lincoln's departure from Springfield were completed. It was intended to occupy the time remaining between that date and the 4th of March with a grand tour from State to State and city to city. Mr. Wood, "recommended by Senator Seward," was the chief manager. He provided special trains, to be preceded by pilot engines all the way through. It was a gloomy day: heavy clouds floated overhead, and a cold rain was falling. Long before eight o'clock, a great mass of people had collected at the station of the Great Western Railway to witness the event of the day.*

*At precisely five minutes before eight, Mr. Lincoln, preceded by Mr. Wood, emerged from a private room in the station, and passed slowly to the car, the people falling back respectfully on either side, and as many as possible shaking his hand. Having reached the train he ascended the rear platform, and, facing the throng which had closed around him, drew himself up to his full height, removed his hat, and stood for several seconds in profound silence... There was an unusual quiver on his lip, and a still more unusual tear on his furrowed cheek. His solemn manner, his long silence, were as full of melancholy eloquence as any words he could have uttered.*

*Mr. Lincoln had prepared his Inaugural Address with great care, and up to the time of his arrival in Washington he had not shown it to any one. Noone had been consulted as to what he should say on that occasion. During the journey the Address was made an object of special care, and was guarded with more than ordinary vigilance. It was carefully stored away in a satchel, which for the most of the time received his personal supervision... »*<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Wilson, James Harrison. As quoted in *"Employees and Staff: Ward Hill Lamon (1828-1893)." Mr. Lincoln's White House.* Accessed 30 December 2024

<sup>2</sup> Lamon, Ward H. *"Recollections of Abraham Lincoln, 1847-1865."* Ed. Dorothy Lamon Teillard, 1911, page 21.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, page 30



# WILLIAM S. WOOD, TRAIN MANAGER

William S. Wood (1823-1883) played a crucial role in organizing the rail transportation and lodging for the Lincolns during their journey from Springfield to Washington prior to the inauguration. He later became a frequent companion of Mary Todd Lincoln during her shopping excursions, but his tenure was short-lived due to controversy.

Mr. Wood’s biographical information is very rare, but we need to note most of them are related to Mr. Lincoln’s suits and appearance, for which he has been in excess of zealous initiative. This is evident in the following incidents: <sup>1, 2</sup>

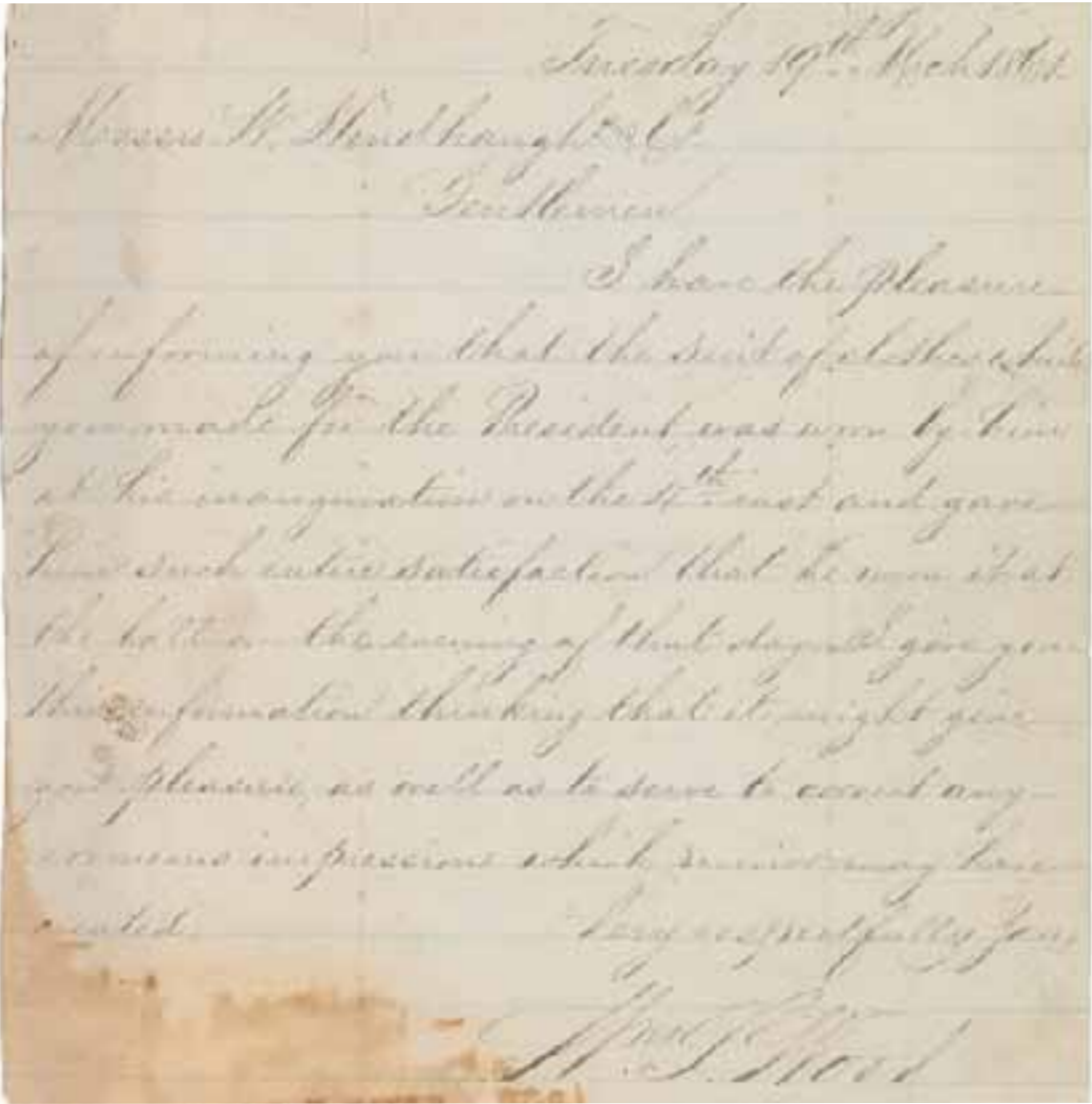
Wood’s involvement with President Lincoln’s wardrobe became a point of contention. In a letter dated 19 March 1861, Wood wrote to Messrs. Hindhaugh & Co.: *“I have the pleasure of informing you that the suit of clothes which you made for the President was worn by him at his inauguration on the 4<sup>th</sup> and gave him such entire satisfaction that he worn it at the ball on the evening of that day.”* <sup>2</sup>

However, Mrs. Lincoln later clarified in October 1861: *“There is no misunderstanding, in the matter, Mr. Wood, without any order or unsolicited, had Mr. L. measured for a suit of clothes. Of course, it was not supposed, they were a present from you, but Wood mentioned, that they were to be presented to the President, and nothing more was thought of it, until your bill was presented.”*

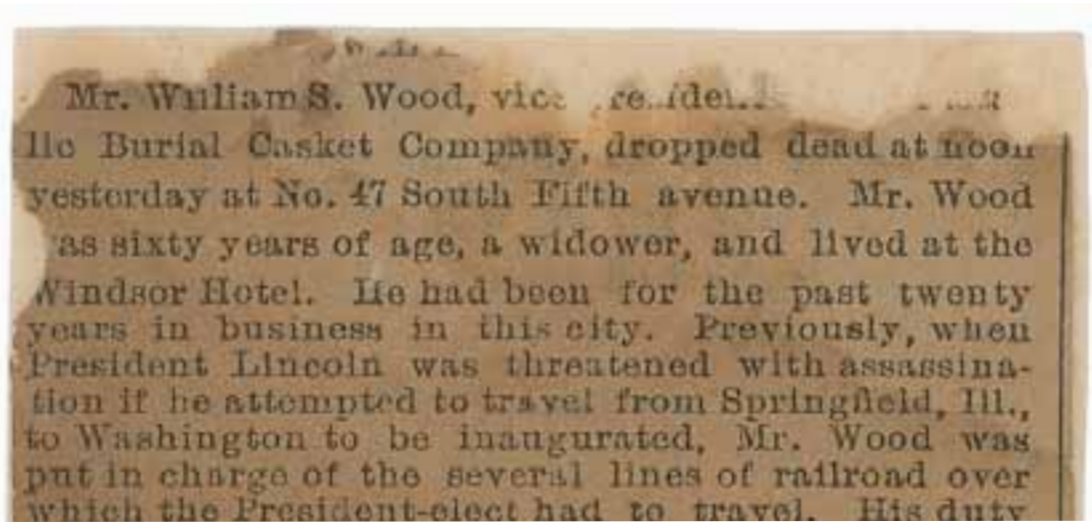
In a subsequent letter, she added: *“It is now brought to our recollection that whilst passing through New York on their way to Washington for Lincoln’s inauguration, last February, that Mr William S. Wood had the President measured for a suit of clothes, unordered & uncalled for, as he was well supplied with clothing. In the summer, I requested Mr Wood, to select a summer suit for him, which he did & is on your bill.”* <sup>3</sup>

Wood’s mismanagement extended to White House finances, with overspending on maintenance and redecoration. His attempts to dismiss gardener John Watt, who was involved in Mrs. Lincoln’s financial manipulations, further soured his relationship with the First Lady. Wood’s career took a downturn in the summer of 1861 when he was exposed as corrupt by Samuel A. Hopkins, a would-be government printer. This led to Wood’s replacement on 6 September 1861. Mrs. Lincoln appeared relieved by this change, referring to Wood as *“unprincipled”* and *“a very bad man.”*

Ultimately, Wood was denied Senate confirmation and lost his position, having managed to anger Congress, the President, Washington merchants, and Mrs. Lincoln.



• William Wood announces to the New York taylors the President wore his new black suit



• Wood late years as a Metallic funeral boxes’s company manager

<sup>1</sup> Lamon, Ward H. *“Recollections of Abraham Lincoln, 1847-1865.”* Ed. Dorothy Lamon Teillard, 1911

<sup>2</sup> *«there appeared in Springfield one W. S. Wood, a former hotel manager and organizer of pleasure excursions...»* Villard, Henry.

<sup>3</sup> RR auctions, #481 - 10 August 2016, lot 24



• William Tinsley • Horace Greeley • Henry Villard • Joe Howard Jr

• IX •

## JOURNALISTS AND MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES

- *Joseph Howard (Reporter, New York Times)*
- *William T. Tinsley (Reporter, Lyons Republican)*
- *Joseph Nelson Larned (Reporter, Buffalo Express)*
- *Henry Villard (Reporter, New York Herald)*
- *Horace Greeley (Editor, New York Tribune)*

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## HENRY VILLARD (*New York Herald*)

The birth name of Henry Villard was Ferdinand Heinrich Gustav Hilgard, from the German city of Speyer. As a teenager, he emigrated to the United States in the 1850s without his parents' knowledge. He changed his name to Henry Villard, the name of a French friend, to avoid being sent back to Europe, and began making his way west, briefly studying law as he developed a career in journalism. Now a young American war correspondent, he became a financier who made later an impressive fortune.

As a *New York Herald* journalist, Henry Villard, had followed Mr. Lincoln for the previous three months since his election, he filed his last dispatch about the train ride from Albany to New York City on 19 February:

*«In the special car were Mr. And Mrs. Lincoln and their suite....Martin J. Townsend, a Chicago delegate, and a great friend of Thurlow Weed, was also on board; but Mr. Lincoln was so unwell and fatigued that he seemed to take very little interest in the political conversation. Mrs. Lincoln chit-chatted with her friends, and seemed all life and enjoyment....»*<sup>1</sup>

*«It was plain to see that the Lincolns are common sense, homelike folks unused to the glitter and flutter of society. Towering above all, with his face and forehead furrowed by a thousand wrinkles, his hair unkempt, his new whiskers looking as if not yet naturalized, his clothes illy arranged, Mr. Lincoln sat toward the rear of the saloon car....»*

More than thirty ears later, Henry Villard left a very long report in his *Memoirs*, posthumously published in 1904:<sup>1</sup>

*“During the month of January, 1861, there appeared in Springfield one W. S. Wood, a former hotel manager and organizer of pleasure excursions, I believe, from the interior of New York state, who, on the recommendation of Thurlow Weed, was to take charge of all the arrangements for the journey of the President-elect to Washington. He was a man of comely appearance, greatly impressed with the importance of his mission, and inclined to assume airs of consequence and condescension. As he showed a disposition to ignore me, I made a direct appeal to Mr. Lincoln, who instructed him that I was to be one of the presidential party.*

*The start on the memorable journey was made shortly after eight o'clock on the morning of Monday, 11 February. It was a clear, crisp winter day. Only about one hundred people, mostly personal friends, were assembled at the station to shake hands for the last time...*

*Everywhere there were formal welcomes by the state or municipal authorities and by great crowds of people, with brass bands, and public and private receptions. »*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Villard, Henry. *“Memoirs of Henry Villard, Journalist and Financier, 1835-1900.”* Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1904

*«In different localities pleasant variations were offered in the way of serenades, torchlight processions, and gala theatrical performances. Altogether, the President had every reason to feel flattered and encouraged by the demonstrations in his honor. But the journey was a very great strain upon his physical and mental strength, and he was well-nigh worn out when he reached Buffalo. He must have spoken at least fifty times during the week.*

*In the kindness of his heart—not from any love of adulation, for he really felt very awkward about it—he never refused to respond to a call for his appearance wherever the train stopped.*

*While he thus satisfied the public curiosity, he disappointed, by his appearance, most of those who saw him for the first time. I could see that impression clearly written on the faces of his rustic audiences. Nor was this surprising, for they certainly saw the most unprepossessing features, the gawkiest figure, and the most awkward manners.*

*After ten days of the wearisome sameness of the “performances” at the several halting-places, I was very sick of the “traveling show,” and I therefore asked to be relieved from my duties on reaching new York. My request was granted, and I remained behind. It turned out that I lost only the reception in Independence Hall in Philadelphia, as the journey was cut short by the incognito night run of the President from Harrisburg to Washington. This sudden move on his part created at the time considerable disappointment, even among his warmest political followers, being regarded as an evidence of unwarranted fear. But subsequent events and developments proved his course to have been a wise one.”*<sup>1</sup>

Villard's critical observations of Lincoln's appearance and mannerisms during the inaugural journey highlight the stark contrast between public expectations and the reality of the President-elect's physical presence, underscoring the potential importance of any photographic documentation from this period, including Clyde's possible daguerreotype.



• Henry Villard's impressive Houses, at 451-457 Madison Avenue, New York City, 1884 (Library of Congress)



# HORACE GREELEY (*New York Tribune*)

Horace Greeley, the influential editor of the New York Tribune, played a significant role in Lincoln's journey to Washington and had a prior connection to Clyde, NY.

Greeley was on the train during the Clyde incident, but he was asleep at the time. Nevertheless, he plays a significant role in this investigation because he had made a special trip to Clyde, NY, just a month before the November 1860 election. During his stay at William Stow's house, he met John B. Roberts and had his portrait taken, which was intended to be kept by the community.

On 16 February 1861, Greeley joined the train in Western Pennsylvania. *"Leaving Ohio behind, the Special train now rolled through the northwestern corner of Pennsylvania. The big surprise here, though, was the unexpected appearance of Horace Greeley, the owner and editor of the New York Tribune. Greeley, known mainly today for his decree, 'Go West, young man', was a major power in politics... He was a Republican and strongly against slavery. Greeley attended the 1860 Republican Convention in Chicago where he played an influential role in bringing about Lincoln's nomination."*<sup>1</sup>

A Cleveland newspaper described Greeley's entrance: *"He walked into the President's car, entirely at home, and instead of seeking Mr. Lincoln chatted in an opposite end of the car and allowed Mr. Lincoln to seek him... Mr. Lincoln presented Mr. Greeley to his wife, and it was observed that the broad brimmed hat never once left its perch upon the back of the Horacian caput. We believe, however, that politeness is not one of Mr. Greeley's eccentricities."*

Greeley later reported on Lincoln's demeanor: *"the President sat listening to the endless whine of office-seekers, and doling out village post offices to importunate or lucky partizans just as though we were sailing before land breezes on a smiling, summer sea; and to my inquiry, 'Mr. President! Do you know that you will have to fight for the place in which you sit?' he answered pleasantly, I will not say lightly — but in words that intimated his disbelief that any fighting would transpire or be needed;"*

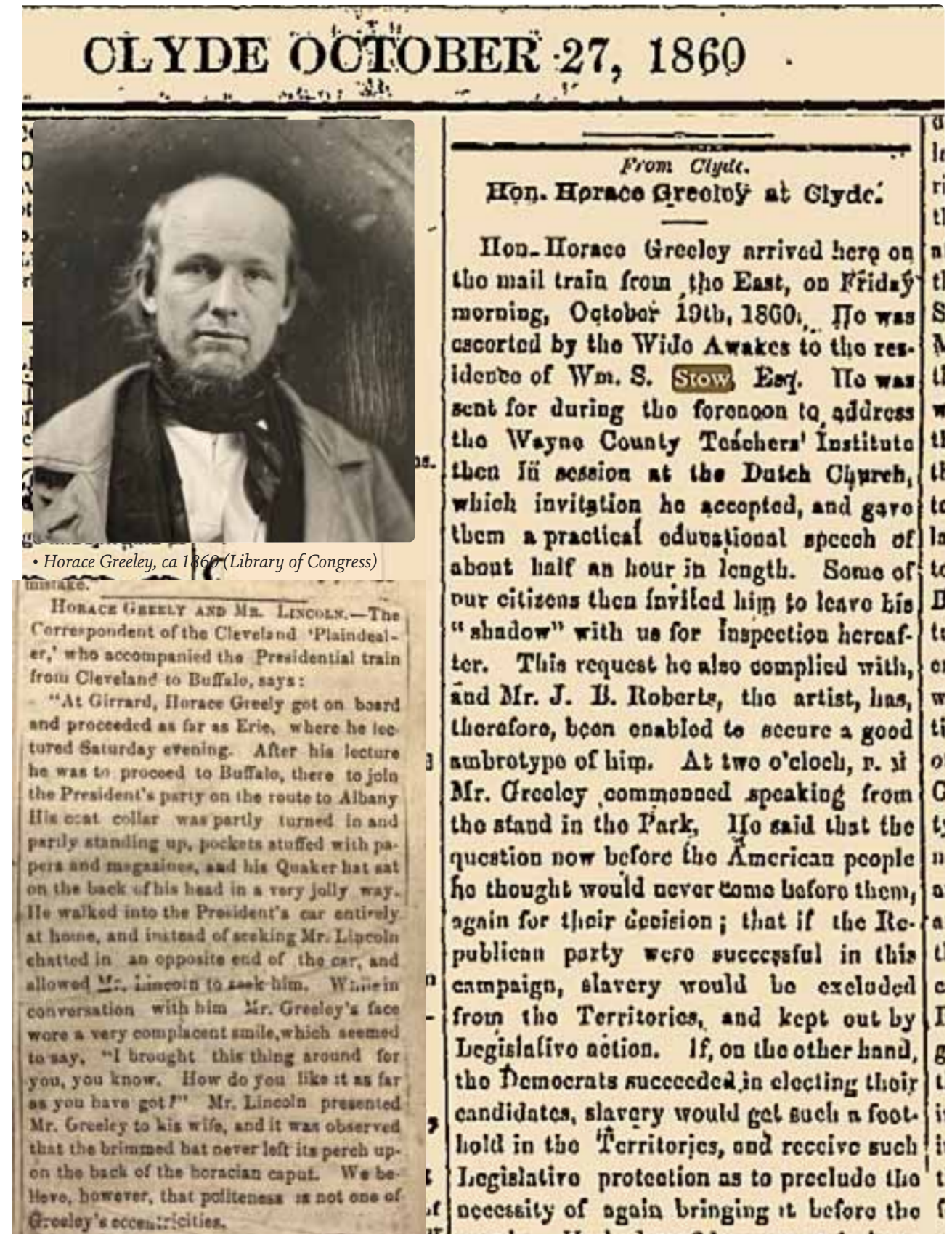
On 18 February 1861, Greeley rejoined the train in Buffalo at 5.45 AM. *"Horace Greeley had arrived in Buffalo on Sunday morning after his speaking engagement in Erie. The editor of the New York Tribune attended church services at the Universalist Church and stayed overnight at the Mansion House on Main and Exchange..."*<sup>2</sup>

Henry Villard of the *New York Herald* reported cynically that *"Mr. Greeley slept most of the way down, and while in a very graceful position he furnished a subject for the pencils of two artists of New York illustrated papers."*<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Fagant, John. "The Best of the Bargain: Lincoln's Journey to Washington." Albany, NY: State Univ. of New York Press, 2010

<sup>2</sup> Howard, Joseph Jr. "The Journey of the President Elect." *The New York Times*, 19 February 1861

<sup>3</sup> Villard, Henry. Dispatch to *New York Herald*, 19 February 1861



• Horace Greeley doesn't go unnoticed! 18 February 1861

• Clyde Weekly Times, 27 October 1860, Horace Greeley visiting



# JOSEPH HOWARD JR (*New York Times*)

Joseph Howard Jr. (1833-1908) was a prominent American journalist and war correspondent who played a significant role in reporting on Abraham Lincoln’s inaugural journey and later became infamous for his involvement in the Civil War Gold Hoax.

As a top reporter for *The New York Times*, Howard diligently chronicled Lincoln’s rail journey across the state by Special Train. His detailed account of the segment between Buffalo and Albany on 18 February 1861, was prominently featured on the front page of *The New York Times* the following morning. Howard’s report provided vivid descriptions of the journey, including:

*“The Presidential party were awakened at the early and inconvenient hour of 4 1/2 o’clock this morning.”*<sup>1</sup>

He described the stop in Clyde, a town of about 3,000 inhabitants:

*“Stepping upon the platform, Mr. Lincoln said : — ‘Ladies and Gentlemen : I merely appear before you to say good morning and farewell. I have no time to speak in, and no speech if I had.’”*

Howard also mentioned an “enterprising artist” who “had placed upon a convenient wood-pile a camera with which he secured pictures of the rear end of the car, of Mr. Lincoln, Mr. Wood, a brakeman, and an unlucky reporter.”<sup>1</sup>

In another column, Joseph Howard precised : “During the entire trip Mr. Lincoln has worn a shocking bad hat, and a very thin old over-oat”... “Shortly after leaving Utica, Mrs. Lincoln gave an order to William the color servant... Since then Mr. Lincoln looked fifty per cent better...”.

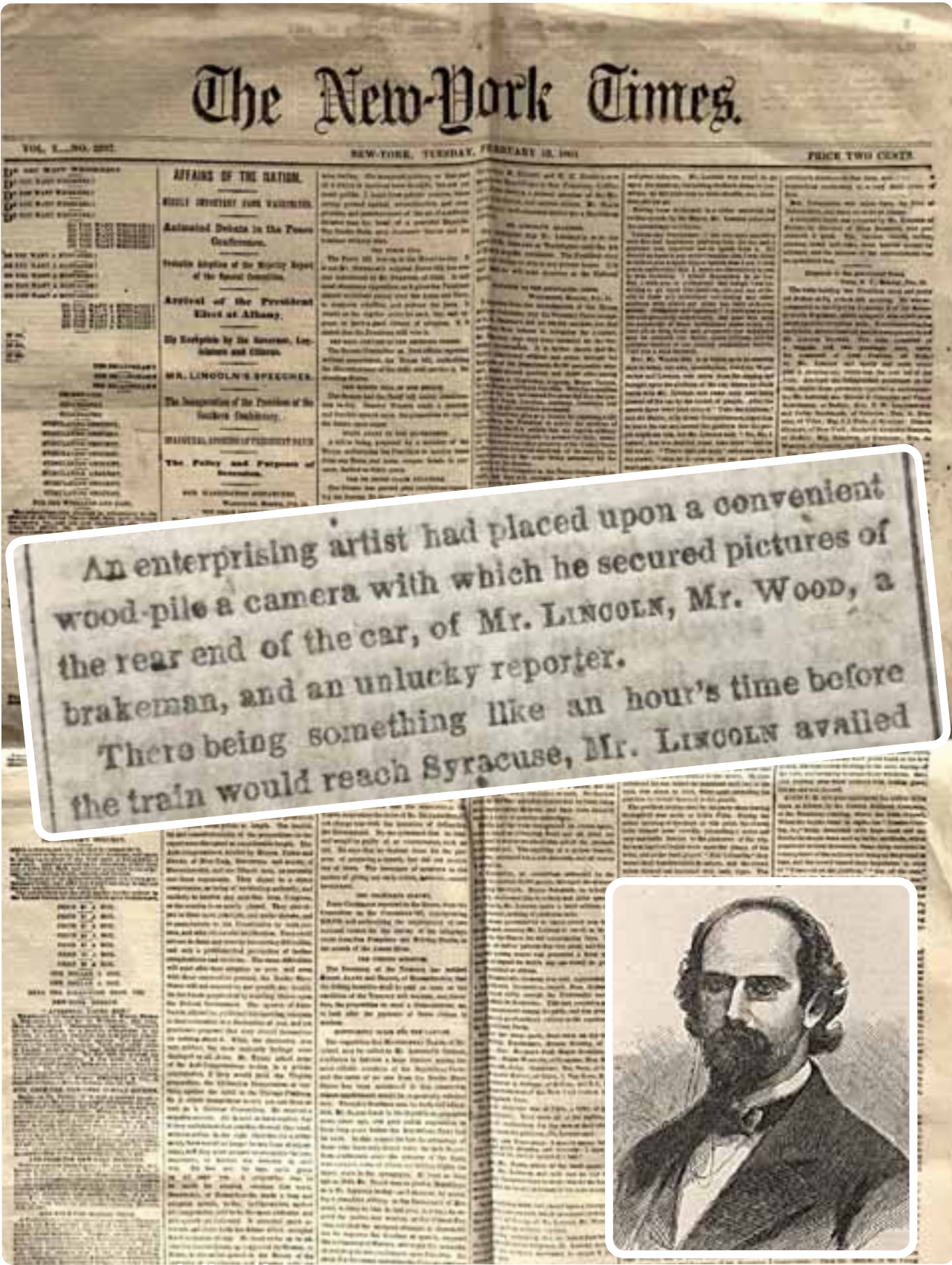
A few days later, he destroyed Abraham Lincoln's image, spreading the rumor that he had disguised himself as a Scottish poacher to cross Baltimore.<sup>2</sup>

However, Howard’s career took a controversial turn during the Civil War. On 18 May 1864, he and fellow reporter Francis A. Mallison were responsible for creating and publishing a forged proclamation falsely declaring another conscription order by President Lincoln and simultaneously investing all his capital in gold. This hoax, known as “Howard’s Proclamation” or the “Great Civil War Gold Hoax,” caused significant disruption in financial markets. Howard was arrested on 20 May 1864, and held as a prisoner of war at Fort Lafayette for 14 weeks. He was released on 22 August 1864, after intervention by Henry Ward Beecher, a friend of Howard’s father, and also because Lincoln ordered the new conscription on 18 July 1864. Howard's false proclamation turned out to be true\*.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Howard, Joseph Jr. “Mr. Lincoln’s Journey.” *The New York Times*, 19 February 1861

<sup>2</sup> Howard, Joseph Jr. “The Journey of the President Elect.” *The New York Times*, 23 February 1861

<sup>3</sup> “The Bogus Proclamation.” *The New York Times*, 19 May 1864. Later edited by Wert, Jeffrey D. “The Great Civil War Gold Hoax”. *American History Illustrated* 1980 15(1): 20-24



• New York Times, Tuesday 19 February 1861 issue

• Joe Howard Jr, convicted, 1864



# WILLIAM T. TINSLEY (*Lyons Republican*)

William T. Tinsley (1833-1893), editor and Proprietor of the Lyons Republican from 1859 to 1889, was recognized as one of the leading weekly newspaper publishers in the country in his day. As a local journalist living near Clyde, just 8 miles (13 km) away by road, Tinsley was uniquely positioned to report on events in the area. His proximity to Clyde gave him a distinct advantage in covering local news, including the presidential visit.

Born in Whittlesea, England, Tinsley celebrated his second birthday on shipboard while traveling with his parents to America. His father, an eccentric portrait painter, instilled in him a love for learning and close observation. This early influence contributed to Tinsley’s private library becoming one of the largest in Wayne County. Tinsley pursued a career in the printing trade, working as a journeyman printer in various villages of Western New York and Freeport, Illinois. In 1858, he married Emma Guiteau and settled in Lyons. Starting as the foreman of the Lyons Republican, he eventually purchased the establishment, producing a newspaper that ranked among the leading Republican publications. Tinsley was known for his unwavering integrity.

His detailed account of the stop in Clyde during the presidential visit is considered one of the most precise in technical terms, he is a neighbour and knows all characters: <sup>1, 2</sup>



• William Tinsley, circa 1861

*“A daguerreian artist had made preparations to daguerreotype Mr. Lincoln, and asked that he might stand still on the platform of the car long enough to afford the opportunity. One of the suite sent the ambitious artist an excellent engraved likeness of the President elect”.*

It’s worth noting, that when Tinsley was near home, all the other journalists were confined to the first car, and the bitter cold prevented them from venturing outside. As a result, they served as indirect witnesses and likely obtained the details from Mr. Wood or Lamon.

As of November 16, 2024, we have not been able to access an original or digitized copy of the Lyons Republican issue containing this account. Librarians at the Library of Congress Newspaper department confirmed that no copy is available in any form in any location of the United States.

# THE LYONS REPUBLICAN!

WILLIAM T. TINSLEY, - - Editor and Proprietor.

**LYONS, - - - N. Y.**

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<sup>1</sup> Fagant, John. *“The Best of the Bargain: Lincoln’s Journey to Washington.”* Albany, NY: State Univ. of New York Press, 2010

<sup>2</sup> *Lyons Republican*, February 1861. Note: Exact date and page number unavailable due to lack of access to the original source



## J. N. LARNED (*Buffalo Express*)

Josephus Nelson Larned's observations of Abraham Lincoln during his stop in Buffalo in February 1861 provide valuable contemporary insights into the President-elect's appearance and character.

As an experienced journalist and editor for *The Buffalo Express*, Larned offered a discerning description that is particularly noteworthy:

*“We think that the universal opinion among those who have seen Mr. Lincoln is that he possesses a much finer countenance than has been represented either in the portraits or the descriptions that have been published. He is certainly not a handsome man, but there is an expression in his face, much due to the eye that lights it, perhaps, which is pleasing in the extreme.*

*There is a blending of gravity and goodness in his look, even when his face is in repose, which wins confidence and affection, and satisfies one of his fitness for the great office, with its weighty responsibilities, to which he has been called by the people of the United States. When he smiles he is handsome, and when he bows he is graceful, notwithstanding the bow is a peculiar one, and the form that bends is not of a graceful mould.”*<sup>1</sup>

Larned's insights into Lincoln's character were prescient. He later wrote:

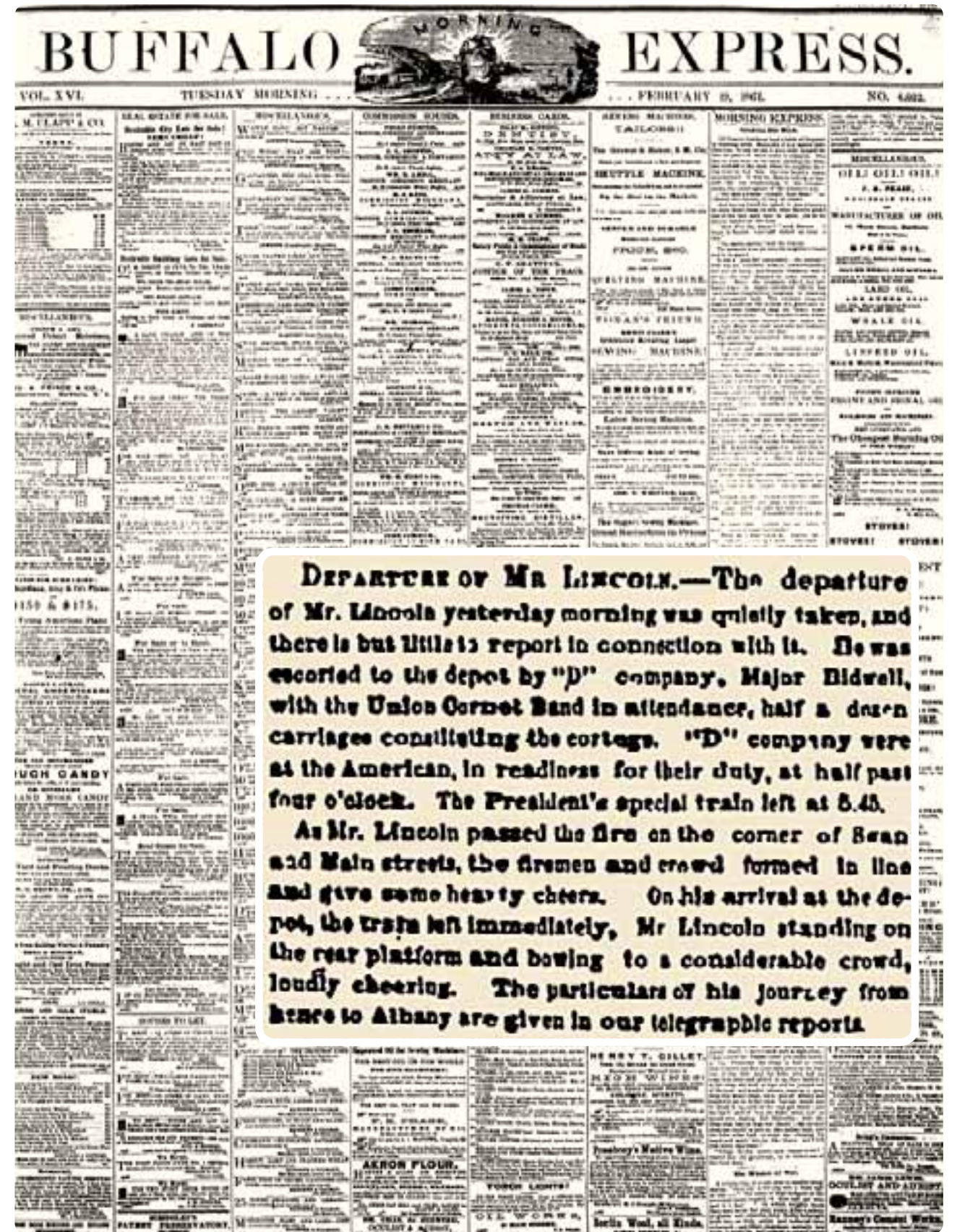
*“And how wise he was! We have heard it disparagingly said that Lincoln had no genius; that he was only a common man with superior common sense. But he was wise with a wisdom which nothing save genius can ever possess. The shrewdly calculating brain of Seward, the large, strong intellect of Chase, the resolute and willful mind of Stanton, could never attain the like of it. He felt the argument and meaning of events. He heard the talk of the people among themselves with an inward ear; he looked into the working of their hearts with an inward eye.”*<sup>2</sup>

These observations offer a unique perspective on Lincoln's appearance and demeanor during his journey to Washington, as well as a thoughtful analysis of his leadership qualities. <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Larned, Josephus Nelson. “*The Buffalo Express*,” February 1861

<sup>2</sup> Larned, Josephus Nelson. “*Reflections on Abraham Lincoln*,” Buffalo, date unknown

<sup>3</sup> In 1869, Mark Twain became a partner at the *Buffalo Express*. Twain avoided writing about politics, leaving that task to Larned, of whom he said: “*I shall not often meddle with politics because we have a political editor who is already excellent and who only needs a term in the penitentiary to be perfect.*”







• X •

## DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES ON LINCOLN'S APPEARANCE

- *Abraham Lincoln's Humble Beginnings*
- *Gibson Harris: A Clerk's Close-Up View*
  - *Martin P. Rindlaub's Recollections*
  - *Grace Bedell's Advice*
  - *Allan Pinkerton's Warning*
  - *Walt Whitman's Observations*
- *Mathew Brady and Lincoln's Public Persona*

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• MMXXV •



# LINCOLN’S HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

Abraham Lincoln’s humble beginnings in a one-room log cabin with a dirt floor in 1809 became a powerful symbol of his rise to the presidency. This narrative of Lincoln as a self-made man was reinforced by the stark contrast between his origins and his later achievements.

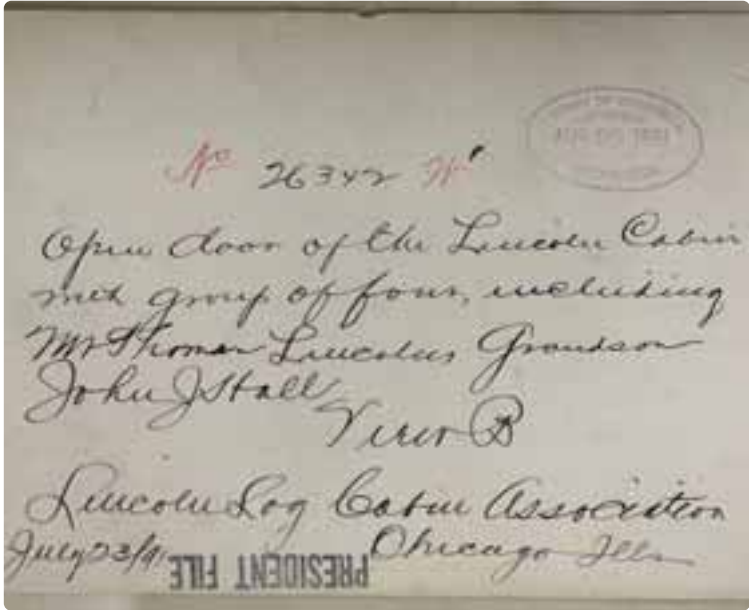
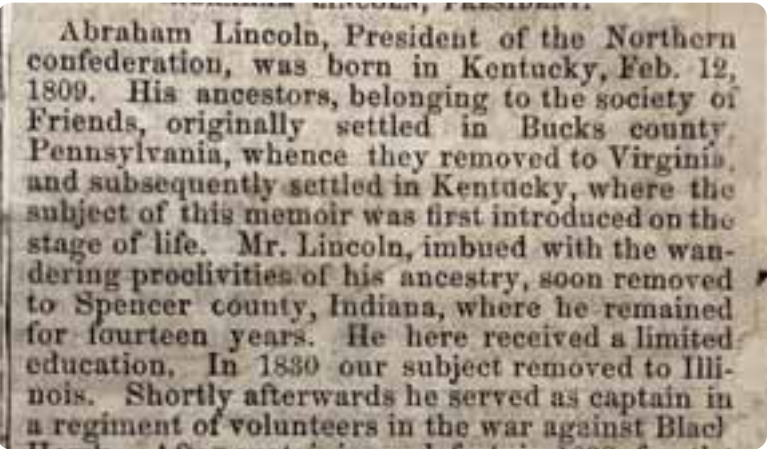
A photograph from 1891 captures a partial view of the Lincoln cabin, featuring Thomas Lincoln’s grandson John J. Hall. This image provides a tangible link to Lincoln’s early life.

Thomas Lincoln, Abraham’s father, moved the family to Illinois in 1830, settling eventually in Coles County. The original log cabin was later disassembled and shipped to the 1893 *World’s Columbian Exposition* in Chicago. Though the original was lost, an exact replica was built based on the 1891 photographs, and is now open to the public at the *Lincoln Log Cabin State Historic Site*.

Abraham’s mother could read but not write. She taught her son his first notions, using her printed Bible. She died from milk sickness in 1818. The father left the children to survive alone for six months while on a trip to find a new wife. He returned with Sarah and her three children in 1819. The relationship between Abraham and his father went very strained. They differed in religious views, with Thomas being a conventional Baptist while Abraham developed as a freethinker. Abraham struck out on his own in 1831 and would rarely return. He was absent from his father’s funeral and reluctant to provide financial assistance.

An 1860 anonymous newspaper article summarizes Lincoln’s background:

*His ancestors, belonging to the society of Friends, originally settled in Bucks county; Pennsylvania, whence they removed to Virginia... Mr. Lincoln, imbued with the wandering proclivities of his ancestry, soon removed to Spencer county, Indiana, where he remained for fourteen years. He here received a limited education. In 1830 our subject removed to Illinois."*



• The Lincoln cabin, albumen prints, 1891 (Library of Congress)

<sup>1</sup> Root, W. J., photographer. *A partial view of the Lincoln cabin with open door and group of four including Mr. Thomas Lincoln's grandson John J. Hall* / Root, Kimball Hall Studio, 243 Wabash Ave., Chicago, Illinois, ca. 1891. Albumen print. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2008677145/>

<sup>2</sup> "Abraham Lincoln, President." Anonymous newspaper article, November 1860. Scrapbook, Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield



# GIBSON HARRIS, A CLERK’S VIEW

Gibson William Harris (1828-1911) was the sole clerk and student at Lincoln’s office for 18 months, from September 1845 to April 1847. He later encountered Lincoln during the inaugural trip in Cincinnati on 12 February 1861.

Harris’s recollections provide valuable insights into Lincoln’s office habits, personal traits, and his successful 1846 campaign for a seat in the Thirtieth Congress. During this campaign, Harris served as Lincoln’s confidential clerk.

They shared similar backgrounds, as Harris notes: *“When Lincoln and I were boys there were no millionaires west of the Allegheny Mountains, and only three in the United States. There were no railroads, no telegraphs, no telephones, no sun-pictures.”*

Harris vividly describes *“Mr. Lincoln’s Physical Traits”* and *“his indifference to dress”*:

*“The antithesis of features and expression was very pronounced in Abraham Lincoln. The expression not merely relieved the plainness of his features; it transformed, on occasions transfigured, them. ... While his six feet and four inches gave him a commanding stature, he was loosely built, gauntly spare in flesh, flat-chested and inclined to stoop. ...*

*His complexion was sallow and his cheeks sunken, both which items were the more noticeable from the fact that he wore neither beard nor whiskers (nor did he ever do so till after his election to the presidency)...*

*The blue-gray eyes when in repose were rather dull-looking. Nevertheless, to see how they kindled the moment he began addressing you or became interested in a subject under discussion was wonderful; it resembled the uprushing waves of light in a winter sky when an aurora borealis is on.”*

*“He manifested no concern for his personal appearance, so far as dressiness went. Provided his clothing was clean and comfortable, the cut of it did not trouble him in the least. The blue jeans in which he was clad when I first saw him, in 1840, had been discarded in favor of broadcloth some time before his marriage. The day I entered his office, in 1845, he had on a black suit — coat and trousers of cloth, vest of satin, and the buckram stock about his neck was covered with black silk. Mrs. Lincoln, as was generally known in Springfield, wished him to ‘spruce up’ more, and perhaps this had something to do with the adoption of the buckram stock, forcing him, as it did, to carry his head more erect than would an ordinary tie. In summer he was accustomed to wear shoes of what was known as the Wellington style, but in winter he wore boots.*

<sup>1</sup>Harris, Gibson W. “My Recollections of Abraham Lincoln.” *The Woman’s Home Companion*, February 1904. These firsthand accounts from Harris provide a unique perspective on Lincoln’s character and daily life during his early political career, offering valuable context for understanding the future president’s development



• Abraham Lincoln as a young man ...



• Rememebererd by Gibson Harris as an old man

*His hat was a regulation ‘stovepipe,’ the same as it was when he filled the presidential chair.”*  
Crucially for our investigation, Harris recounts Lincoln’s first encounter with photography:

*«Early in the tedious days (of September 1845), I made the acquaintance at the hotel of a young man from Syracuse, New York, named N. H. Shephard, a daguerreotypist who was about opening a gallery in Springfield. Photographs were as yet unknown, and daguerreotyping was considered, as it actually was, a marvelous advance in the art of portraiture.*

*Together we two, Shephard and I, looked up a boarding-place, where we became room-mates, remaining such throughout my stay in Springfield. He was among the very first in his line to come as far west as Illinois, and we were warm friends to the end. In the latter part of 1848 he wrote me (at Albion) that he was about to start for California, and promised to write again in a few weeks or months; but further word never came from him, and I have always believed that, like so many others, he was lost on the overland trail... I feel confident I am not mistaken in recognizing the portrait as the work of my friend Shephard, before whose camera I know Mr Lincoln sat once or oftener. The claim repeatedly made for it of being the earliest portrait of Abraham Lincoln remains, as far as I know, an undisputed fact.”*

Harris was also a witness to the Inaugural Journey:

*“Mr. Lincoln, in the character of President-elect en route to Washington, spent twenty-four hours in Cincinnati. The date was 12 February 1861, being his fifty-second birthday.... For nearly an hour we chatted without interruption, the time passing delightfully for me in reviving old memories and gaining the latest information respecting former friends in Springfield.”*



# MARTIN P. RINDLAUB’S RECOLLECTIONS

Martin P. Rindlaub (1838-1932), a native of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, witnessed Abraham Lincoln during the famous Lincoln-Douglas debate in Freeport, Illinois on August 27, 1858.

His detailed account provides valuable insights into Lincoln’s appearance and demeanor. Key points from Rindlaub’s recollection: <sup>1</sup>

- *Lincoln’s arrival: “an old-fashioned Conestoga wagon, drawn by four horses, was driven to the stand. On one of the seats sat Lincoln, accompanied by half a dozen farmers in their working clothes.”*
- *“He was swarthy as an Indian, with wiry, jet-black hair, which was usually in an unkempt condition.”*
- *“He wore no beard, and his face was almost grotesquely square, with high cheek bones.”*
- *“His eyes were bright, keen, and a luminous gray color, though his eyebrows were black like his hair.”*
- *“His figure was gaunt, slender, and slightly bent.”*
- *“He was clad in a rusty-black Prince Albert coat with somewhat abbreviated sleeves.”*
- *“His black trousers, too, were so short that they gave an appearance of exaggerated size to his feet.”*
- *“He wore a high stove-pipe hat, somewhat the worse for wear, and he carried a gray woolen shawl.”*
- *“His manner of speaking was of a plain, unimpassioned character.”*
- *“He gesticulated very little with his arms, but moved his body from one side to the other.”*
- *“Sometimes he would bend his knees so they would almost touch the platform, and then he would shoot himself up to his full height, emphasizing his utterances in a very forcible manner.” <sup>1,2</sup>*

Rindlaub’s vivid description offers a unique perspective on Lincoln’s appearance before he grew his iconic beard. Rindlaub was 20 years old at the time of the debate. He wrote at least three articles recounting his memories of this event, the most detailed for the *Kiwanis Magazine* in May of 1926.

Following is a large quote from his written reminiscences: <sup>1</sup>



• Martin P. S. Rindlaub



• Stephen Douglas, dag, reversed



• Abraham Lincoln, 1858, O-8

*«...an old-fashioned Conestoga wagon, drawn by four horses, was driven to the stand. On one of the seats sat Lincoln, accompanied by half a dozen farmers in their working clothes. The driver was mounted on the near rear horse and guided his team with a single rein attached to the bridle of one of the lead horses. The burlesque was as complete as possible and the effort was greeted with a good-natured roar.*

*The contrast between Lincoln and Douglas could hardly have been more marked. Lincoln was six feet four inches tall. He was swarthy as an Indian, with wiry, jet black hair, which was usually in an unkempt condition. He wore no beard, and his face was almost grotesquely square, with high cheek bones. His eyes were bright, keen, and a luminous gray color, though his eyebrows were black like his hair. His figure was gaunt, slender, and slightly bent. He was clad in a rusty-black Prince Albert coat with somewhat abbreviated sleeves.*

*His black trousers, too, were so short that they gave an appearance of exaggerated size to his feet. He wore a high stove-pipe hat, somewhat the worse for wear, and he carried a gray woolen shawl, a garment much worn in those days instead of an over-coat. His manner of speaking was of a plain, unimpassioned character. He gesticulated very little with his arms, but moved his body from one side to the other. Sometimes he would bend his knees so they would almost touch the platform, and then he would shoot himself up to his full height, emphasizing his utterances in a very forcible manner. » (M. P. Rindlaub)*

<sup>1</sup> Rindlaub, Martin P. “Lincoln as I Saw Him.” *Kiwanis Magazine*, May 1926. Accessed 5 December 2024 <https://grantcountyhistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Rindlaub.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> “You are just twelve inches taller than Judge Douglas, that is, just six feet one inch.” Leonard Wells Volk account of Spring 1860 meeting, *Century Magazine*, December 1881

# GRACE BEDELL’S ADVICE

Grace Bedell (1848-1936) was notable as a person whose correspondence, at the age of eleven, encouraged Republican Party nominee and future president Abraham Lincoln to grow a beard. On 15 October 1860, from Westfield, Chautauqua County, NY, Grace Bedell wrote:

*“Hon. A. B. Lincoln — Dear Sir,  
My father has just come home from the fair and brought home your picture and Mr. Hamlin’s. I am a little girl only eleven years old, but want you to be President of the United States very much so I hope you won’t think me very bold to write to such a great man as you are. Have you any little girls about as large as I am? If so, give them my love and tell them to write to me if you cannot answer this letter. I have got 4 brothers and part of them will vote for you anyway and if you let your whiskers grow I will try and get the rest of them to vote for you. You would look a great deal better for your face is so thin. All the ladies like whiskers and they would tease their husbands to vote for you and then you would be President. My father is going to vote for you and if I was a man I would vote for you too but I will try and get everyone to vote for you that I can. I think that rail fence around your picture makes it look very pretty. I have got a little baby sister she is nine weeks old and is just as cunning as can be. When you direct your letter direct to Grace Bedell Westfield Chautauqua County New York. I must not write any more. Answer this letter right off — Good bye.”*<sup>1</sup>

Lincoln answered right away but made no promises in his reply to Bedell’s letter:

*“Springfield, Ill Oct 19, 1860 Miss Grace Bedell. My dear little Miss. Your very agreeable letter of the 15th is received. I regret the necessity of saying I have no daughters. I have three sons — one seventeen, one nine, and one seven years of age. They, with their mother, constitute my whole family. As to the whiskers, having never worn any, do you not think people would call it a silly affectation if I were to begin it now? Your very sincere well-wisher, A. Lincoln”*<sup>2</sup>

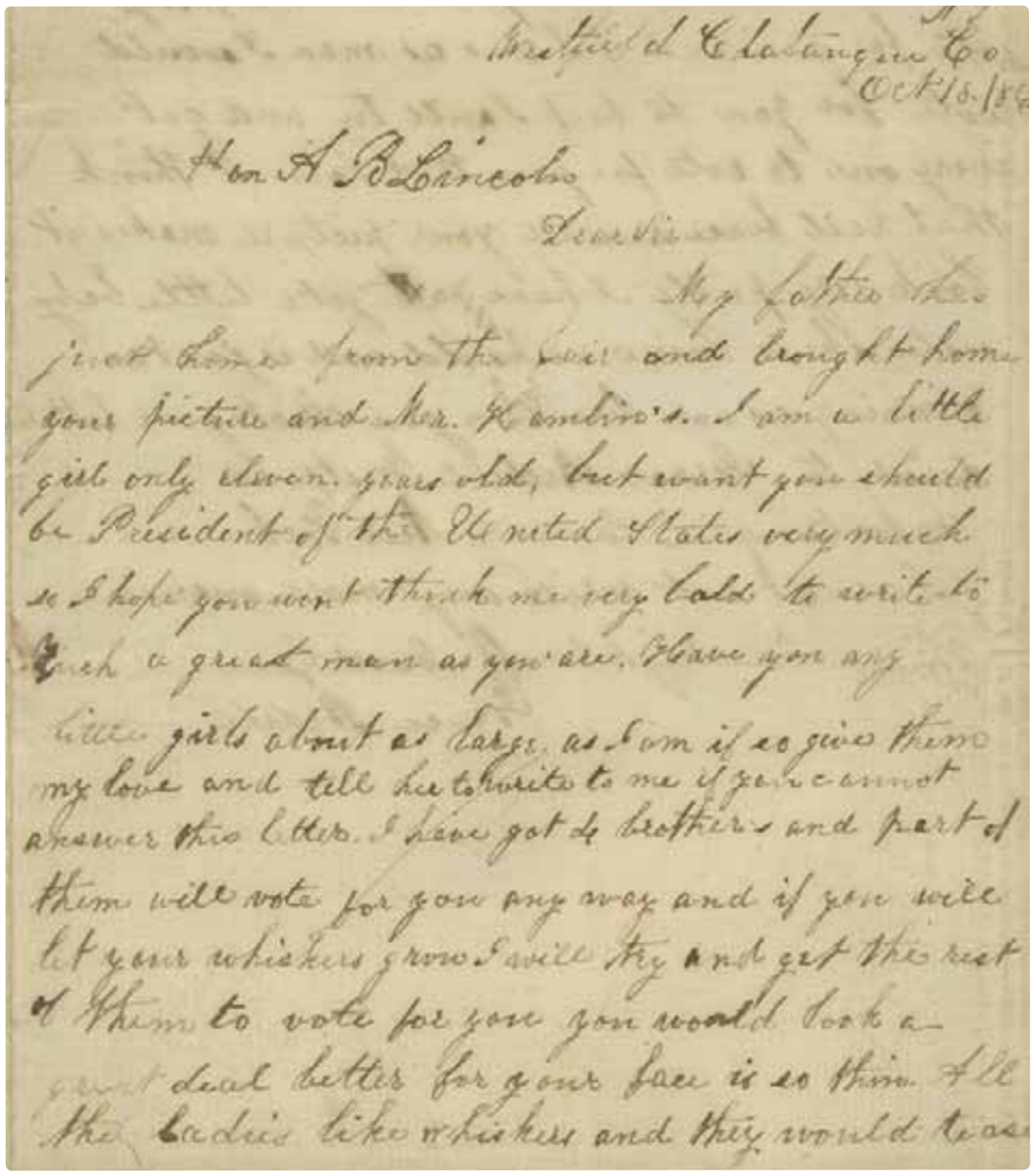
About three weeks later, once he was elected, he started to grow a beard, having received more letters, and probably considered building his image like Kossuth.

Lincoln later met with Bedell during his inaugural journey in February 1861. All reporters published the details and Bedell recalled the event years later: *“He climbed down and sat down with me on the edge of the station platform,”* she recalled. *“‘Gracie,’ he said, ‘look at my whiskers. I have been growing them for you.’ Then he kissed me. I never saw him again.”*

Bedell wrote a second letter to Lincoln in 1864 when she was 15<sup>3</sup> :

<sup>1</sup> Bedell, Grace. Letter to Abraham Lincoln, 15 October 1860  
<sup>2</sup> Lincoln, Abraham. Letter to Grace Bedell, 19 October 1860  
<sup>3</sup> Bedell, Grace. Letter to Abraham Lincoln, January 1864. This letter was discovered by Karen Needles, a researcher, in 2007, in the voluminous files of the National Archives

*“Pres Lincoln, After a great deal of forethought on the subject I have concluded to address you, asking your aid in obtaining a situation. Do you remember before your election receiving a letter from a little girl residing at Westfield in Chautauqua Co. advising the wearing of whiskers as an improvement to your face? I am that little girl grown to the size of a woman. I believe in your answer to that letter you signed yourself. ‘Your true friend and well-wisher.’ Will you not show yourself my friend now...”*



\*



# ALLAN PINKERTON'S WARNING

Allan J. Pinkerton (1819-1884) was a Scottish American detective and spy, best known for creating the Pinkerton National Detective Agency. Pinkerton's business insignia was a wide open eye with the caption "*We never sleep.*" As the US expanded in territory and rail transport increased, Pinkerton's agency solved a series of train robberies during the 1850s, first bringing Pinkerton into contact with George McClellan, then Chief Engineer and Vice President of the Illinois Central Railroad, and Abraham Lincoln, the company's lawyer.

After Lincoln's election, Pinkerton served as head of the Union Intelligence Service during the first two years, heading off an alleged assassination plot in Baltimore, Maryland while guarding Abraham Lincoln on his way to Washington, D.C.<sup>1</sup>

Pinkerton's warning to Lincoln had a significant impact on the President-elect's appearance and health:

- Lincoln became visibly anxious and stressed, likely affecting his eating habits and sleep patterns.
- The strain of the secret journey and constant fear for his safety took a toll on Lincoln's health.
- Lincoln's appearance worsened, with reports of weight loss and a gaunt. This sudden change in appearance was noticeable enough to draw public attention and concern.
- The stress may have exacerbated Lincoln's existing health issues, including his bouts of depression, haggard look.

The story of Lincoln's secret journey through Baltimore is famous.<sup>2, 3, 4</sup>

In Buffalo, Norman B. Judd received two communications from Allan Pinkerton during the inaugural train ride. The first, received in Cincinnati, advised of a plot to assassinate Lincoln in Baltimore. The second, delivered in Buffalo on February 17, stated that evidence was accumulating. Judd informed Lincoln on February 19 in New York.

That evening in Harrisburg, after a reception in his honor, the President-Elect slipped away to begin his clandestine trip, accompanied only by his longtime friend and bodyguard Ward Hill Lamon. To avoid recognition, Lincoln substituted a soft plug hat for his signature stovepipe. Pinkerton agents cut telegraph lines to prevent communication of Lincoln's movements.



• Pinkerton with a Kossuth hat, Antietam (O-62)



• Adalbert Volck. *Passage through Baltimore.* / (coll. Harold Holzer)

The following morning, angry journalists awakened to learn that Lincoln had vanished. Once allowed to report, most journalists covered the developments forthrightly. However, Joseph Howard of *The New York Times* exacted his revenge in print. On February 25, *The Times* published his fictional account that Lincoln had stolen through Baltimore "*disguised in a Scotch plaid Cap and very long military cloak so that he was entirely unrecognizable.*"

Though the story was maliciously and obviously fabricated, Lincoln's press opponents pounced on it. *The New York Herald* criticized that the new president had "*crept into Washington*" like a "*thief in the night.*" When Horace Greeley attempted to excuse the president-elect by insisting, "*Mr. Lincoln may live a hundred years without having so good a chance to die,*" James Gordon Bennett of the *Herald* shot back: "*We have no doubt The Tribune is sincerely sorry at his escape from martyrdom.*"<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Pinkerton, Allan. "*The Spy of the Rebellion.*" New York: G.W. Carleton & Co., 1883

<sup>3</sup> "*The President Elect.*" *New York Herald*, 26 February 1861

<sup>2</sup> *The New York Times*, 25 February 1861

<sup>4</sup> Harold Holzer, *Lincoln and the Power of the Press: The War for Public Opinion*, page 286

# WALT WHITMAN'S OBSERVATIONS

Walt Whitman's account of Abraham Lincoln's arrival in New York City on 19 February 1861, provides a vivid and detailed description of the president-elect's appearance and the crowd's reaction. Key points from Whitman's observation <sup>1, 2</sup> include:

- Unusual and uncouth height
- Dark-brown complexion
- Seamed and wrinkled yet canny-looking face
- Black, bushy head of hair
- Disproportionately long neck
- Lincoln's attire, he is dressed in complete black
- Stovepipe hat pushed back on his head
- Lincoln's demeanor, a perfect composure and coolness
- Hands held behind his back
- Observed the crowd with curiosity in an unbroken silence

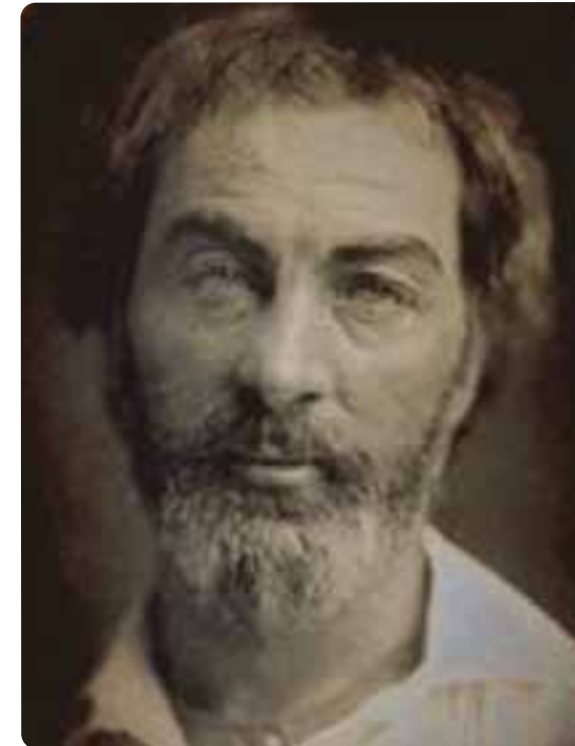
Whitman's account, written years after the event, offers a unique perspective on Lincoln's appearance and the atmosphere surrounding his arrival in New York City.

The contrast between this description and the possibly earlier subject daguerreotype suggests a significant change in Lincoln's appearance during his journey, which was later corroborated by a *New York Times* journalist's report of Lincoln's transformation from a wild man of the West to a well-dressed president.

*"I shall not easily forget the first time I ever saw Abraham Lincoln. It was a rather pleasant afternoon in New York City, as he arrived there from the West, to remain a few hours and then pass on to Washington to prepare for his inauguration. I saw him in Broadway, near the site of the present post office. He came down, I think from Canal Street, to stop at the Astor House."* <sup>1</sup>

*The broad spaces, sidewalks, and street in that neighborhood and for some distance were crowded with solid masses of people — many thousands. The omnibuses and other vehicles had all been turned off, leaving an unusual hush in that busy part of the city.*

*Presently two or three shabby hack barouches made their way with difficulty through the crowd and drew up at the Astor House entrance. A tall figure stepped out of the center of these barouches, paused leisurely on the sidewalk..."*



• Walt Whitman, daguerreotype, ca. 1853, NYPL collection



• Thomas Nast. Lincoln arriving in NYC, 19 February 1861, Brown University collection. Published by Ted Widmer

*"There were no speeches, no compliments, no welcome — as far as I could hear, not a word said. Still, much anxiety was concealed in that quiet."*

*Cautious persons had feared some marked insult or indignity to the president-elect — for he possessed no personal popularity at all in New York City and very little political. But it was evidently tacitly agreed that if the few political supporters of Mr. Lincoln present would entirely abstain from any demonstration on their side, the immense majority — who were anything but supporters — would abstain on their side also. The result was a sulky, unbroken silence, such as certainly never before characterized a New York crowd.*

*From the top of an omnibus (driven up on side, close by, and blocked by the curbstone and the crowds) I had, I say, a capital view of it all and especially of Mr. Lincoln: his looks and gait; his perfect composure and coolness; his unusual and uncouth height; his dress of complete black, stovepipe hat pushed back on his head; dark-brown complexion; seamed and wrinkled yet canny-looking face; black, bush head of hair; disproportionately long neck; and his hands held behind, as he stood observing the people.*

*He looked with curiosity upon that immense sea of faces, and the sea of faces returned the look with similar curiosity. In both there was a dash of comedy, almost farce, such as Shakespeare puts in his blackest tragedies ...»* <sup>1</sup> (Walt Whitman)

<sup>1</sup> Whitman, Walt. "The Death of Abraham Lincoln." Lecture delivered in New York on 14 April 1879. <sup>2</sup> Whitman, Walt. "Specimen Days in America." London: Walter Scott, 1887.



# BRADY AND LINCOLN’S PUBLIC PERSONA

When we look at the work of iconographers who have attempted to make an exhaustive catalog of photographic portraits of Abraham Lincoln, we are fascinated by the contrast between, on the one hand, the candid relationship to photography in the first fifty years of Abraham Lincoln’s life, born into a time before photography. And on the other, as soon as he became US President, his pioneering and efficient political use of photography, with the complicity of photographer Mathew Brady and his studio assistants <sup>1, 2, 3</sup>. Abraham Lincoln is certainly still the human being whose face is best known to the world’s living inhabitants.

*“For Lincoln, this dark technology was a godsend. Despite his penchant for making fun of his appearance, Lincoln knew that his “phiz” was instantly recognizable, all the more so after hair began to appear on it. And recognizability was an asset when all known facts relating to the government of the United States were up for grabs.”*

Lincoln historian Ted Widmer highlights the importance of photography to Lincoln’s public image and discusses Lincoln’s relationship with photographer Mathew Brady:

*“Lincoln said, ‘Brady and the Cooper Institute made me president.’ For on the same day that he gave the great Cooper Union address, in February 1860, he did something just as significant when he stopped at Brady’s New York studio for a likeness.*

*Brady, the former painter, was not averse to certain forms of retouching (he made Lincoln’s neck less scrawny by artificially enlarging his collar), and the result was a surprisingly normal-looking candidate. Not a savage from the wilds of Illinois, or a baboon, as he was often called, but a reasonable facsimile of a human being. That image was widely disseminated during the tumultuous campaign, as Americans by the thousands bought small buttons with his tintyped image affixed to them.*

*But that was then, in the distant antebellum. Now that war had broken out, Americans needed to see their president as he actually looked that spring. In an age that was tiring of romantic clichés and simply wanted facts, the photograph was emerging as the portrait of choice. So Lincoln came to Brady. Repeatedly. He did so as soon as he arrived in Washington in late February, taking a photograph just after the wild train journey that brought him to the White House. That image was widely disseminated in Harper’s Weekly on April 27. And he did so again in May, most likely on May 16, thanks to recent research.*

*The images that resulted from that session, his first serious sitting as president, are striking. This is not a teller of jokes, or an escapee from the back woods.*

*What the English journalist William Howard Russell called his “wild republican hair” has been subdued and rests in place. He sits regally in an elegant chair – a chair, in fact, that Lincoln had given to Brady, after having rescued it from the House of Representatives. It was likely his former chair when he was a representative. The mood is somber, serious, and intense at times. He is no longer a mere politician – this is the president of the United States.»* (May 2011)

Widmer’s analysis provides valuable insights into the role of visual imagery in shaping Lincoln’s public persona during his journey to the presidency.

In his book “*Lincoln on the Verge*,” Widmer offers a comprehensive and insightful analysis of Lincoln’s inaugural journey, drawing from his background as a historian and former White House speechwriter. He explores the role of photography during Lincoln’s time:

*“Photography was a fluid technique in 1861, in every sense. It had made rapid strides since the first inchoate smudges of a backyard in France. Improvements followed fast and furious; the daguerreotype in 1839; the ambrotype in 1851; the tintype in 1856. The United States had no shortage of tinkers, and like characters in Hawthorne short story, these wizards drew from science, experimenting with bits of silver, iodine and even egg whites to cheat nature out of her secrets.”*



• Mathew Brady multipose self portrait, 1863, courtesy U.S. National Archives



• Brady, Lincoln, 1860. O-17    • Lincoln, February 1861. O-53    • Brady, 16 May 1861. O-60    • Lincoln, 8 Nov. 1863. O-77

<sup>1</sup> Widmer, Ted. “*Lincoln on the Verge: Thirteen Days to Washington*.” Simon & Schuster, 2020    <sup>3</sup> Wilson, Robert. “*Mathew Brady: Portraits of a Nation*.” London: Bloomsbury, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Lossing, Benson John, and Mathew B. Brady. “*Mathew Brady’s Illustrated History of the Civil War, 1861-65*” (1912)



Erie Canal Route, as exhibited in the Erie Canal Museum, Syracuse, the Central New York Railway follow the Canal Route 1861

• XI •

## STOP AT CLYDE, NY ON THE INAUGURAL TRAIN JOURNEY

- *Village of Clyde on the Erie Canal*
- *Bird's-Eye View of Clyde, Wayne Co.*
  - *Clyde Railway Station*
- *Joseph Pain & The Clyde Weekly Times*
  - *The Local Editor's Account*
- *Weather Report, 18 February 1861*
  - *Lighting Conditions at 8.48 AM*
  - *Local Historian Wayne Morrison*

SENIGALLIA

• MMXXV •



# VILLAGE OF CLYDE ON THE ERIE CANAL

The Village of Clyde, situated on the Clyde River, is part of the Town of Galen in Wayne County, New York. Located on the county’s southern border and west of Syracuse, Clyde had a population of 2,093 in 2010, while the town’s population was 4,290. The village is approximately equidistant from Rochester and Syracuse.

The area’s rich history dates back to 1722, as documented in the *Documentary History of New-York*: “The first white men known to have set their feet upon the ground that yet constitutes a part of the village of Clyde, came in the summer of 1722, when William Burnet, colonial governor of New-York, sent an expedition into what is now the interior of the state to make a settlement or trading post for the opening of a fur trade with the western Indians.”<sup>1</sup>

This expedition established a block house on the north bank of the Clyde River, which played a significant role in subsequent conflicts:

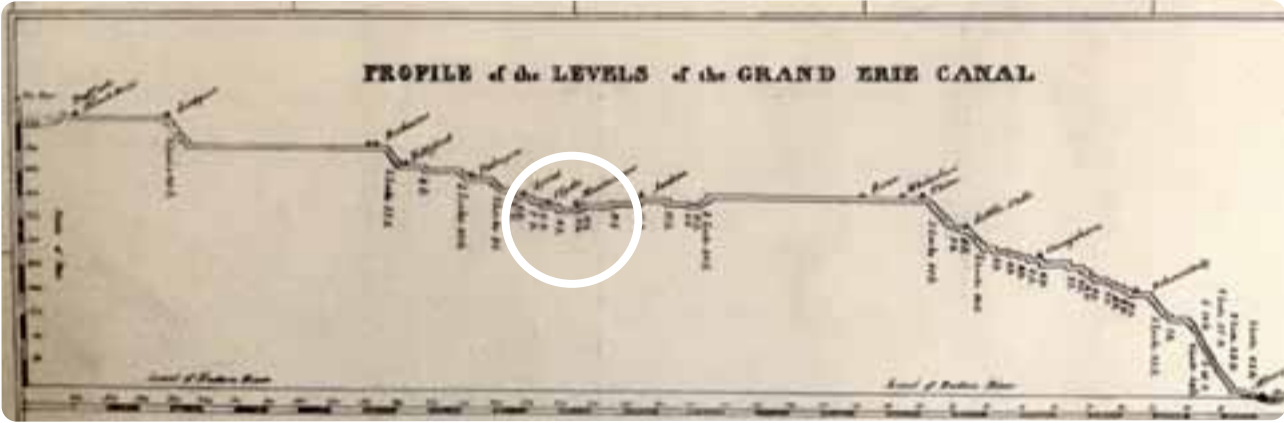
*“It was used during the French and Indian War and also during the Revolutionary War by whoever happened to be in possession of it. After peace had been declared between the victorious United States and England, it was used by smugglers and marauding British soldiers, &c., until about 1800, when the government sent soldiers to clean them out. During the fighting the building was set on fire and destroyed.”*

The development of Clyde as a community began in earnest in the early 19th century. On February 21, 1817, the State Legislature granted Maj. Frederick A. de Zeng the right to dam the Clyde River for water power. The following year, he constructed a dam and mills, which were crucial to the area’s economic growth.

Frederick Augustus de Zeng, a key figure in Clyde’s development, was a Saxon nobleman born in Dresden in 1756. His life story is intriguing. De Zeng’s influence on Clyde was significant, and he spent his final years there:

*“Baron de Zeng fell in love with a charming Quakeress of Long Island, and determined at the close of the war to make America his home. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of November, 1789, he was naturalized as an American citizen... He was connected with General Schuyler in establishing and carrying on the ‘Western Inland Lock Navigation Company,’ subscribing largely for the stock and taking a personal interest in the construction of the works... His long, active life closed at Clyde, Wayne county, where two of his married children, William Steuben de Zeng and Maria Stow resided, on the 26<sup>th</sup> of April, 1838, at the age of 82 years, and he was buried at that place.”*<sup>2, 3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “*Documentary History of the State of New-York*,” compiled by E.B. O’Callaghan and published between 1849 and 1851, «Year 1722»  
<sup>2</sup> “*History of Wayne County, NY.*” Everts, Ensign & Everts, 1877  
<sup>3</sup> Morrison, Wayne E. “*Morrison’s History of Clyde, Wayne Co., New York.*” 5<sup>th</sup> edition, 1980



• Profile of the Erie Canal, showing Clyde Lock (red circle), 1850

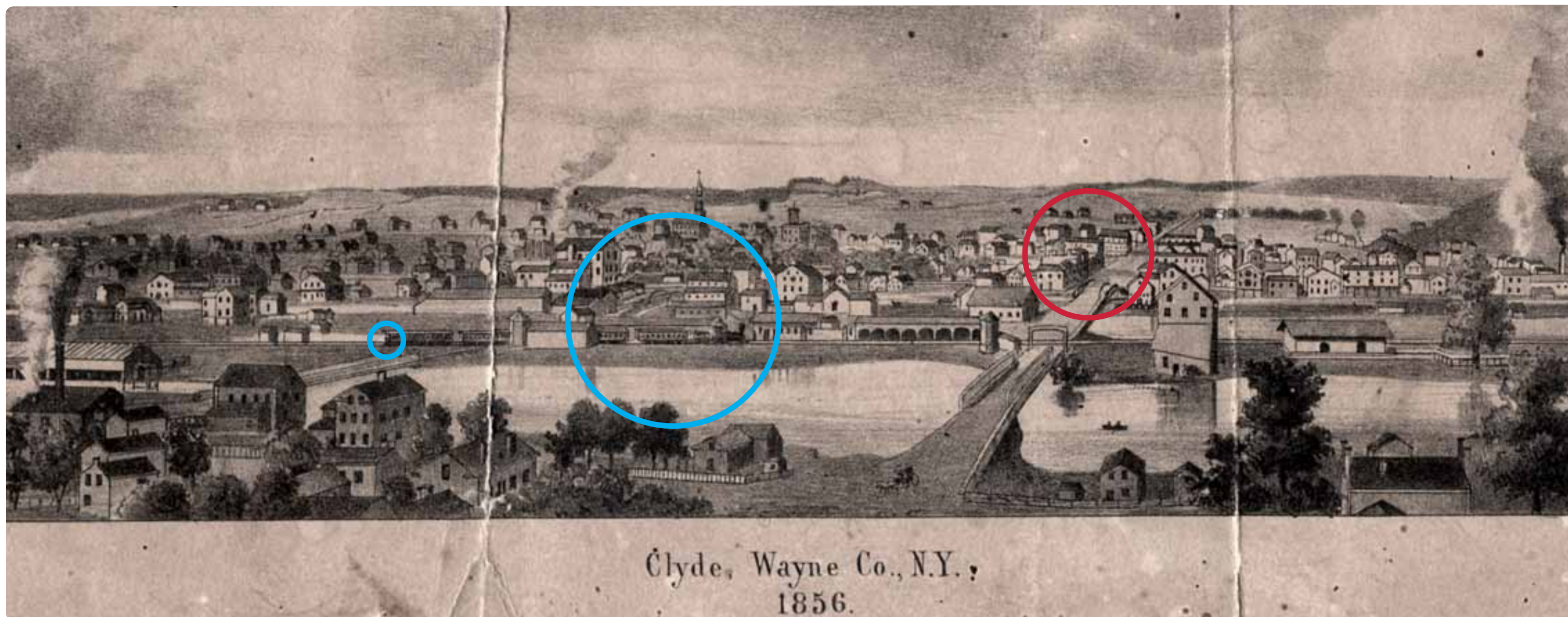
The Erie Canal transits the southern edge of the county. The villages of Clyde, Lyons, Newark, Palmyra and Macedon all became homes to canal locks when the Albany to Rochester section of the canal opened on September 10, 1823. The Erie Canal was completed on October 26, 1825, and was crucial to Clyde’s development. This 363-mile engineering marvel, with its 18 aqueducts and 83 locks, provided inexpensive transportation that boosted agriculture and industry in Western New York.

Clyde’s canal heritage is still visible today. Remnants of the Enlarged Erie Canal Lock 53 (Clyde Lock) can be found near the intersection of N.Y. Route 31 and Old Route 31, just west of the village. This site stands as a testament to Clyde’s significant role during the canal era.



• Remnants of Enlarged Erie Canal Lock 53 (Clyde Lock), west of Clyde village.





• Birdseye view of Clyde, Wayne Co, NY, lithograph, 1856, Courtesy Steeve Groat, Clyde

This panoramic view of Clyde, N.Y., offers a valuable snapshot of the village at the time of Lincoln's stop. The artist has captured several key elements crucial to our investigation:

The passenger train is depicted stopped at Clyde, with the locomotive near the passenger depot (**large blue circle**). This accurately represents the scene during Lincoln's brief stop.

The train agent is shown standing on the platform of the rear car (**smaller blue circle**), a detail that aligns with accounts of Lincoln's journey.

The Perkins block, which housed Roberts' Daguerrian gallery, is clearly visible on Glasgow street (**red circle**). This location is of particular interest for our investigation into potential daguerreotypes of Lincoln.

The creation of this bird's-eye view coincided with the publication of a Cadastral Wall-Map of the Town of Galen and Village of Clyde in 1856. This map, surveyed by J. H. French of Philadelphia, provides additional context:

*"The work was first commenced by French in November of 1855, and completed late in the summer of 1856. An agent was procured for the canvass of the town and village, who met with success in his endeavors and was accompanied by a photographic artist, who was actively engaged in the taking of the daguerreotypes used for the eighteen views which were set down upon the map at a cost of \$15 to the owner of the same".*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Morrison, Wayne E. "Morrison's History of Clyde, Wayne Co., New York." 5<sup>th</sup> edition, 1980, page 100



# CLYDE RAILWAY STATION

The New York Central Railroad was established in 1853, consolidating over ten existing railroad companies that competed with the Erie Canal. The first of these was the Mohawk and Hudson Railroad, chartered in 1826, which provided a faster alternative for freight and passengers to avoid the time-consuming locks on the Erie Canal between Schenectady and Albany, New York.

The Rochester and Syracuse Direct Railway, chartered and merged into the Rochester and Syracuse Railroad on August 6, 1850, opened on June 1, 1853. This line ran more directly between Rochester and Syracuse, roughly parallel to the Erie Canal, further intensifying the competition between rail and water transport.

While the Erie Canal remained competitive with railroads until about 1902, when tolls were abolished, the advent of faster and more efficient rail transport gradually shifted the balance of freight and passenger traffic away from the canal. This shift in transportation methods played a significant role in shaping the development of towns like Clyde along both the canal and the railroad routes.

Wayne Morrison's account provides detailed information about the Clyde railway station:

*“On November 11, 1852, the first locomotive entered Clyde from the east on the Rochester & Syracuse, which had at that time been built as far west as Clyde, and on May 30, 1853, the first regular passenger train passed over the route, the fare from this village to Syracuse being 75 cents.*

*The freight office and depot were constructed in 1853. The original depot was replaced with a brick structure in 1885-1886, which, along with the freight office, was demolished in 1962. Jacob VanBuskirk was the first ticket agent when the line opened, succeeded by William Watters in June 1860, who held the position for 24 years. In 1866, double tracks were laid from Albany to Buffalo.”<sup>1</sup>*

Morrison noted that while Clyde was an attractive community on the Erie Canal, it was not the political or economic center of Wayne County. He was puzzled by the Special train's stop there and did not connect it with Horace Greeley's visit just before the November 1860 election.



• Clyde, Passengers Depot, detail of a postcard, ca. 1910



\* Section of Village Map of Clyde from 1874 Wayne County Atlas - D. G. Beers.

<sup>1</sup> Morrison, Wayne E. "Morrison's History of Clyde, Wayne Co., New York." 5<sup>th</sup> edition, 1980



# JOSEPH PAIN & THE CLYDE WEEKLY TIMES

The *Clyde Weekly Times*, located on Glasgow street (*large blue circle*), played a significant role in documenting local events, including Lincoln's visit.

The newspaper's history began with its predecessor, the *Clyde Eagle*, which ran from 16 April 1844 to 1847. "At a meeting of the Agricultural Association of Galen, a committee of three was appointed to make the arrangements, if possible, for the re-establishment of a weekly journal in this village. The efforts were culminated some months later with the establishment by Pain & Smith of The Industrial Times on Saturday, 23 March 1850."<sup>1</sup>

Joseph A. Pain married his business partner, Emily M. Smith, on 28 April 1850<sup>2</sup>. He then started the *Industrial Times* on 4 May 1850, later changing its name to *The Clyde Weekly Times*. Joseph Pain left Clyde in November 1865 and moved to Corry, PA where he started a newspaper because of his interest in the new oil fields. (Wayne Morrison)

The Clyde newspaper's building (*blue circle*) faced the Daguerreian Gallery on the upper floor of the Perkins Block (*red circle*).

In the 1850s, The *Clyde Weekly Times* regularly published advertisements for local photographers, with only one photographer advertised at a time. John B. Roberts was the sole local photographer advertising at the time of Lincoln's arrival.

Joseph Pain announced the train's stop two days in advance in the Saturday, 16 February 1861 edition<sup>3</sup>:

"The President elect will pass through Clyde, on Monday morning, the 18th inst., between 8 and 9 o'clock am, on his way East.

*It is very certain that the train will wood and water at Clyde; so that our citizens and visitors will run a good chance of getting a sight of him". (The Clyde Weekly Times, 16 February, 1861)*

A report of Lincoln's visit was published in the following issue on 23 February 1861, only in the fifth column<sup>4</sup>, reproduced and commented page 129 of this report.

Interestingly, Pain did not print a special edition about Lincoln's visit. One might wonder why. Could the extremely cold weather that month have played a role in this decision? Or were there other factors at play? This presents an intriguing question for historians and readers to consider.

<sup>1</sup> Morrison, Wayne E. "Morrison's History of Clyde, Wayne Co., New York." 5<sup>th</sup> edition, 1980

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, page 505. "At Auburn, Cayuga Co., on April 28, 1850, Mr. Joseph A. Pain, of Clyde, married Miss Emily M. Smith, of the former place."

<sup>3</sup> Pain, Joseph A. *The Clyde Weekly Times*, 16 February 1861

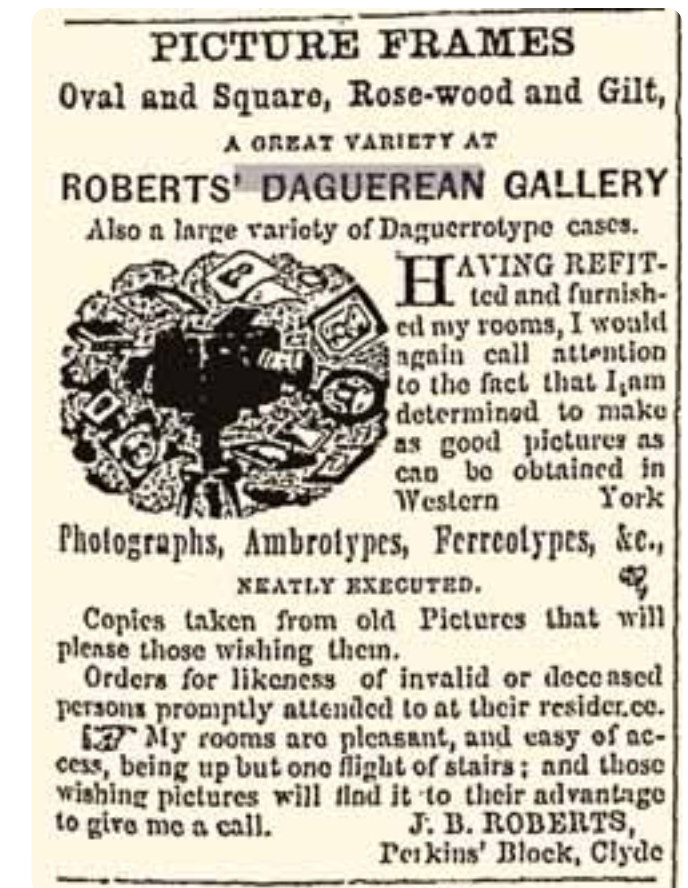
<sup>4</sup> Pain, Joseph A. *The Clyde Weekly Times*, 23 February 1861



• Clyde, Glasgow Street looking South, The Clyde Times office faces the Daguerreian Gallery



• Joseph A. Pain, from a family-owned portrait



• John B. Roberts' Weekly Times, weekly advertising



# THE LOCAL EDITOR’S ACCOUNT

On Saturday, February 23, 1861, five days after the presidential visit, Joseph A. Pain described Lincoln’s Brief Stop in Clyde in the *Clyde Weekly Times*:

*“On Monday morning, bright and early, notwithstanding the heavy snow and deep drifts of Saturday night and Sunday morning, the roads in every direction were filled with teams and leads of human beings coming to see the President-elect. The village streets were thronged with vehicles, and by eight o’clock a large concourse of people were assembled at the depot, anxiously awaiting the Presidential train. At 8.40 AM the train hove in sight, the work engine whistled, the canon belched forth its thunder notes, and every man, woman and child was agog with excitement. Nobly the train sped along; and as it moved towards the waterhouse the crowd closed in behind, and watched for the signs of the ‘coming man’. As soon as the train stopped, six feet four of humanity stepped out of the car, and when on the platform, an enthusiastic cheer greeted Hon. Abraham Lincoln, President elect of the U. S.”*<sup>1</sup>

William Wood introduced the President-elect to the approximately three thousand people in attendance. Typically, a local politician or townsman would have the honor of answering to Lincoln in the name of the community. In this instance, no one was available for the speech, Lincoln spoke only briefly. *“Ladies and gentlemen: I merely appear before you to say good morning and farewell. I did not come to make a speech; nor have I time to make one if I did. I now bid you good morning, and when the train starts I will come out again and bid you farewell.”*

*“When Mr. Lincoln re-entered the car, we again got upon the platform and conversed with Mr. Wood during the short period occupied in wooding and watering. As soon as the locomotive whistled for starting, Mr. Lincoln stepped out upon the platform, and saying, — ‘I bid you all farewell’ — bowed several times to the crowd, who returned the greeting with enthusiastic cheers. We were then introduced by Mr. Wood, to the president elect, and shaking hands with him, said, we would disperse the shake to our readers in our next edition. During this time the cars were in motion, and when we reached the lower crossing we parted company...”*

According to Searcher, *“the editor of the local paper pushed up to the platform and told Lincoln he had been deputized by the people to shake hands, then distribute the handshake in tomorrow’s edition. Saying it was a fine idea, Lincoln shook hands heartily.”*<sup>2</sup>

Notably, Joseph Pain doesn’t mention the daguerreotype incident nor his falling in the snow. Interestingly, John B. Roberts’ weekly advertisement was published as usual on page 4 of this issue, indicating his continued presence as the local photographer during Lincoln’s visit. This juxtaposition raises questions about the alleged daguerreotype incident and its omission from Pain’s account.



Instead, Pain kept a very light tone. *“We stood by Mr. Lincoln’s side when he was bidding the crowd farewell, and to give some idea of his height, our head reached about half way between his elbow and shoulder; and though not tall, we are not among the smallest race of bipeds.”*

<sup>1</sup> Pain, Joseph A. *The Clyde Weekly Times*, 23 February 1861      <sup>2</sup> Searcher, Victor. *“Lincoln’s Journey to Greatness.”* New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1960



# WEATHER REPORT, 18 FEBRUARY 1861

The weather conditions on the day of Lincoln’s stop in Clyde were well-documented from various sources, providing crucial information for understanding the potential for daguerreotype photography.

Joseph A. Pain reported in the *Clyde Weekly Times*:

*“On Monday morning, bright and early, notwithstanding the heavy snow and deep drifts of Saturday night and Sunday morning, the roads in every direction were filled with teams and leads of human beings coming to see the President-elect.”*<sup>1</sup>

John P. Van Deusen, a resident near Lockville (now Arcadia), 15 miles west of Clyde, recorded in his diary the previous day’s snowfall:

*“I saw the Special Train of cars on which President A. Lincoln is going to Albany today. Many people went to the Depot but the train passed very fast. Some who went from here to Clyde got a sight of him... 18 to 20 inches of snow, I should think, fell last night. Blows some today.”*<sup>2</sup>

The extreme cold was evident, as hundreds of people could walk and stand on the iced surface of the Erie Canal. The frigid conditions persisted throughout Lincoln’s journey, with John Fagant noting:

*“There were two arrests made by the Syracuse police that morning. In the first one, a boy was charged with throwing a snowball at Lincoln.”*<sup>3</sup>

These weather conditions - bright, sunny, and cold with significant snowfall - have important implications for potential daguerreotypes.

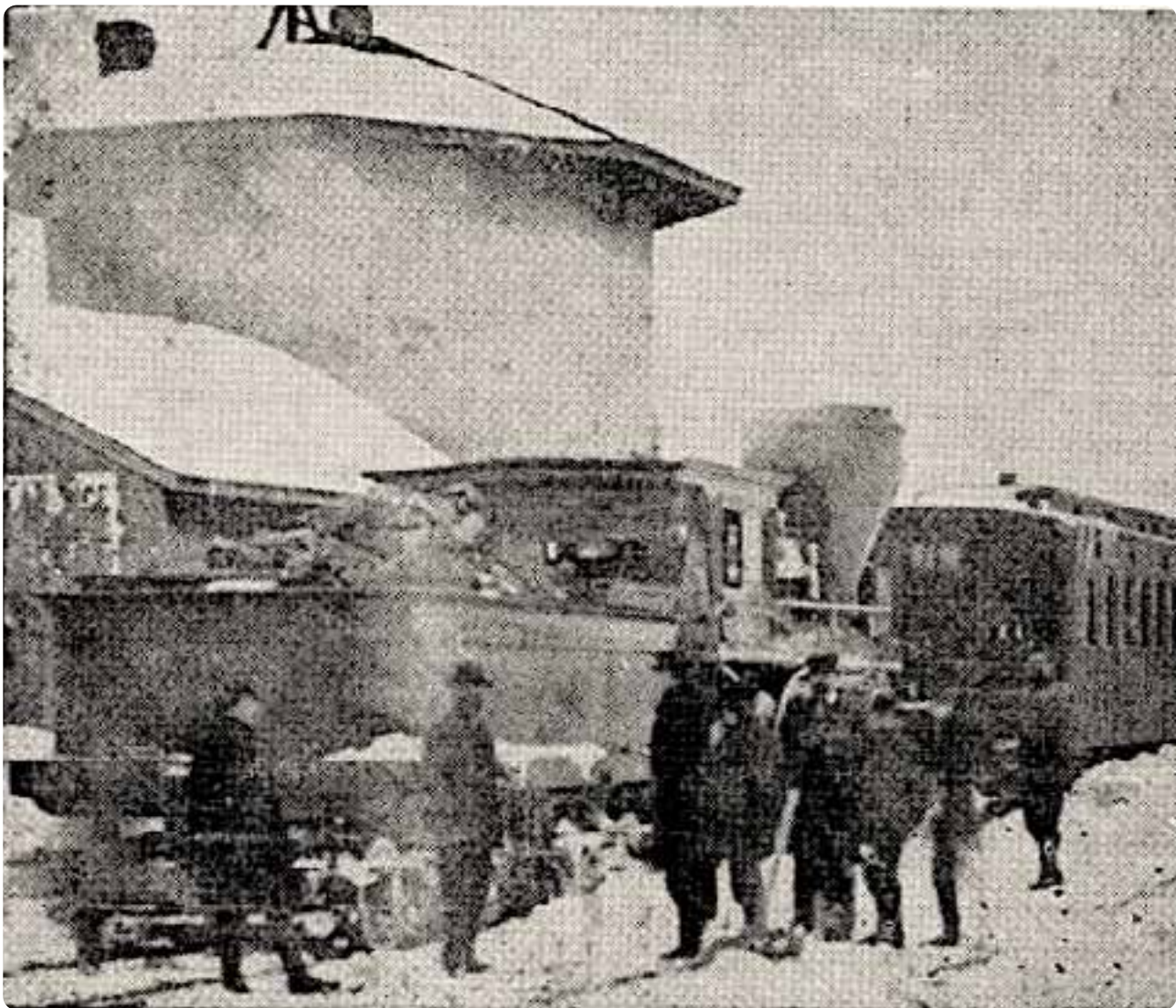
The low temperatures might have influenced the choice of daguerreotype over wet collodion photography. As Solomon N. Carvalho noted in his 1856 book *“Incidents of Travel and Adventure in the Far West”*:

*“To make daguerreotypes in the open air, in a temperature varying from freezing point to thirty degrees below zero, requires a different manipulation from the processes by which pictures are made in a warm room.... Buffing and coating plates, and mercurializing them, on the summit of the Rocky Mountains, standing at times up to one’s middle in snow, with no covering above save the arched vault of heaven, seemed to our city friends one of the impossibilities...”*<sup>\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Pain, Joseph A., *The Clyde Weekly Times*, 23 February 1861

<sup>2</sup> Van Deusen, John P. Personal diary entry, 18 February 1861. Quoted by Wayne Morrison

<sup>3</sup> Fagant, John. *“The Best of the Bargain: Lincoln’s Journey to Washington.”* Albany, NY: State Univ. of New York Press, 2010



• Rail-road yards, Clyde depot, winter 1860-1861, photograph reproduced by Wayne Morrison, *History of Clyde*

Carvalho’s experience <sup>4</sup> suggests that while difficult, daguerreotype photography could have been a viable option for capturing Lincoln’s image during his brief stop in Clyde, given the weather conditions.

<sup>4</sup> Carvalho, Solomon N. *“Incidents of Travel and Adventure in the Far West.”* New York: Derby & Jackson, 1856. Quoted by Beaumont Newhall, *The Daguerreotype in America*. New York Graphic Society, 1968.



# LIGHTING CONDITIONS, CLYDE, 8.48 AM

On 18 February 1861, in Clyde, the sun rose at 7.04 AM, and the presidential train arrived at 8.44 AM. Understanding the sun’s position is crucial for analyzing potential photographic conditions.

The solar path represents the apparent hourly and seasonal motion of the Sun across the sky as the Earth rotates and orbits the Sun. It provides insight into the Sun’s position for any given date and location. To create a Solar Path Polar Chart for Clyde in 1861, resources like those from the University of Oregon can be used.<sup>1</sup>

Clyde’s geographical coordinates are 43°5’3” N (latitude) and 76°52’13” W (longitude). Using this information, we can cross-reference the red date line for February 18 with the blue hour line for 8.48 AM on the solar chart. This helps us determine that, at that moment, the Sun’s elevation was below 20 degrees, and its azimuth was close to 135° East.

n the Northern Hemisphere during winter months (December to February), the Sun rises in the southeast, moves across the southern sky at a low angle, and sets in the southwest.

**Sun position:** At 8.48 AM, the Sun’s elevation was below 20 degrees, with an azimuth close to 135° East.

**Winter solar path:** In February, the Sun rises in the southeast, moves across the southern sky at a low angle, and sets in the southwest.

**Shadow characteristics:** The low Sun angle would create distinct, elongated shadows.

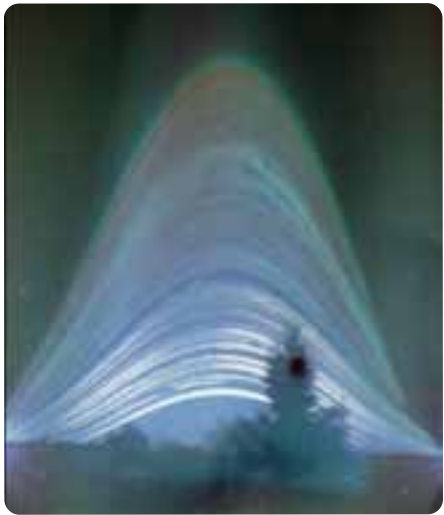
**Train orientation:** The azimuth of 135° East nearly aligns with the train’s eastward direction towards Syracuse and Albany.

**Photographic setup:** This scenario suggests that Lincoln would have been facing the rising Sun, with the photographer positioned on the south bank of the railway, having the Sun at his back.

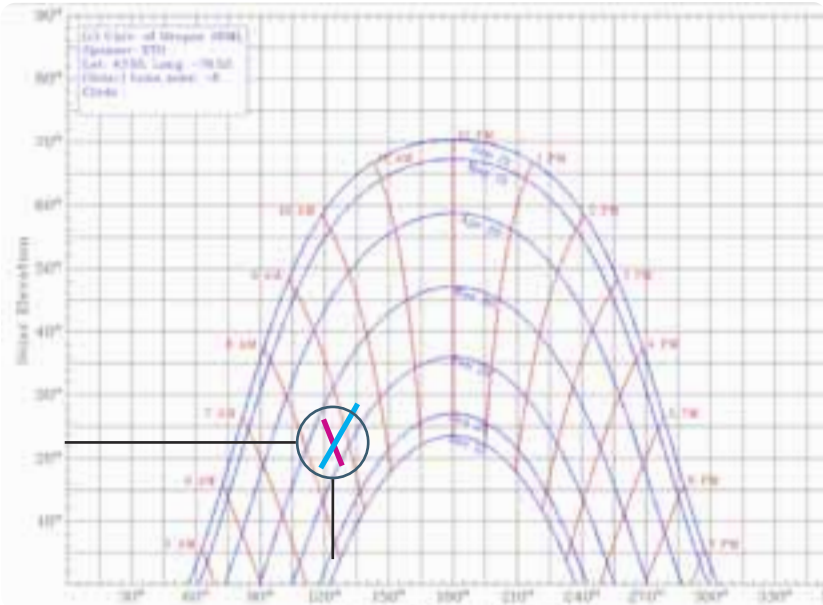
**Subject positioning:** Lincoln would likely have been on the side steps of the platform, facing the Sun, with his back against the empty sky and the crowd.

The resulting low and nearly symmetric shadows, especially those cast by Lincoln’s hat and whiskers, align with this scenario. This calculation provides a foundation for reconstructing a possible photographic event. The experiment and diagram on pp. 156-157 further illustrate these lighting conditions and their implications for any potential daguerreotype taken during Lincoln’s stop in Clyde.

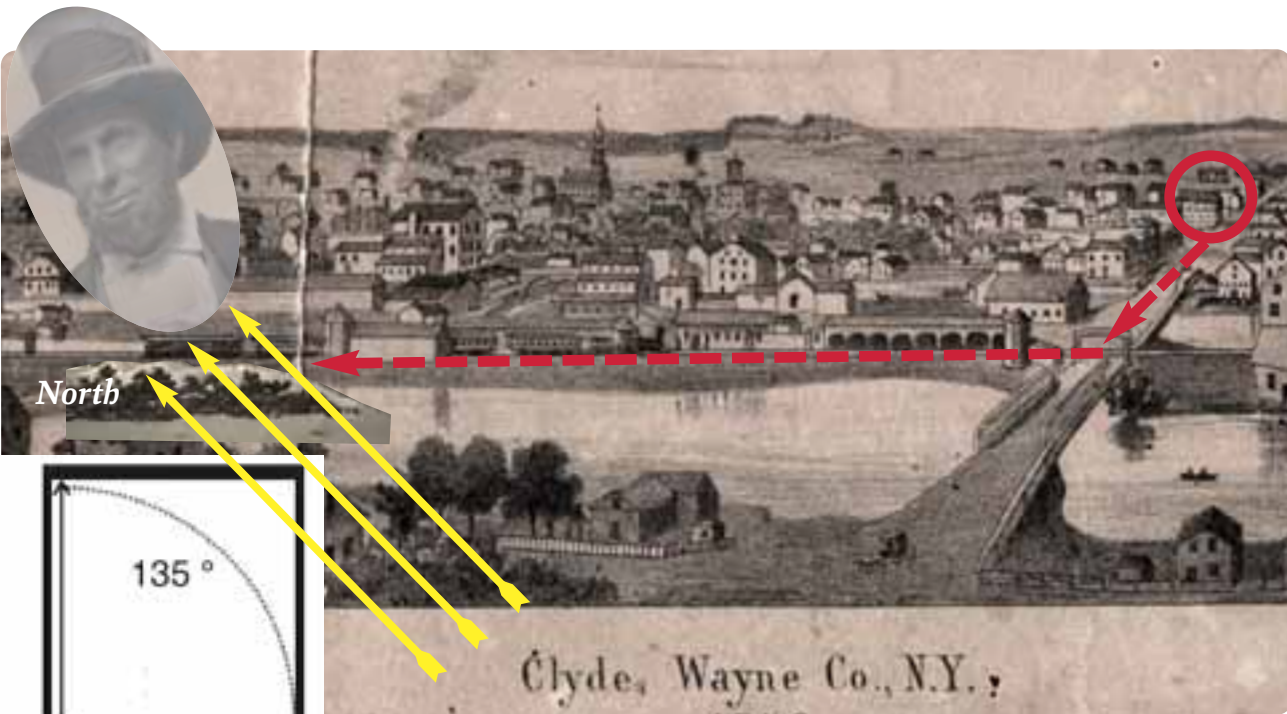
<sup>1</sup>University of Oregon Solar Radiation Monitoring Laboratory.  
“Solar Path Chart Generator.” Accessed 24 November 2024.  
<https://solardata.uoregon.edu>



• Solar Graph in latitude 47,49



• Solar Path Polar Chart for 1861 in Clyde, courtesy University of Oregon<sup>1</sup>



• Clyde, NY, 1856, panoramic view showing Glasgow stree and the railway depot, the red path from the Perkins Block to the convenient wood pile along the railways

South-East



# LOCAL HISTORIAN WAYNE MORRISON

Wayne Morrison (1932-2012), a local typographer and publisher, dedicated forty years of his life to studying local history <sup>1</sup>. The most significant event in Clyde's history, according to Morrison, was the stop made by Lincoln's inaugural train and the photograph allegedly taken during this visit. His extensive research was later carefully summarized by John Fagant <sup>2</sup>.

Morrison's work, *"Morrison's History of Clyde, Wayne Co., New York,"* evolved from a modest 48-page publication in 1955 to a comprehensive 515-page small folio over five editions. The expanded versions included early history of the town of Galen and detailed illustrations of Clyde's scenery, buildings, and prominent figures.

Morrison's research on the Lincoln photograph was based on various sources, including local lore and family memories. He wrote:

*"A daguerreian artist had made preparations to daguerreotype Mr. Lincoln, and asked that he might stand still on the platform of the car long enough to afford the opportunity. One of the suit sent the ambitious artist an excellent engraved likeness of the President elect."*

The existence of the photograph was further supported by oral history:

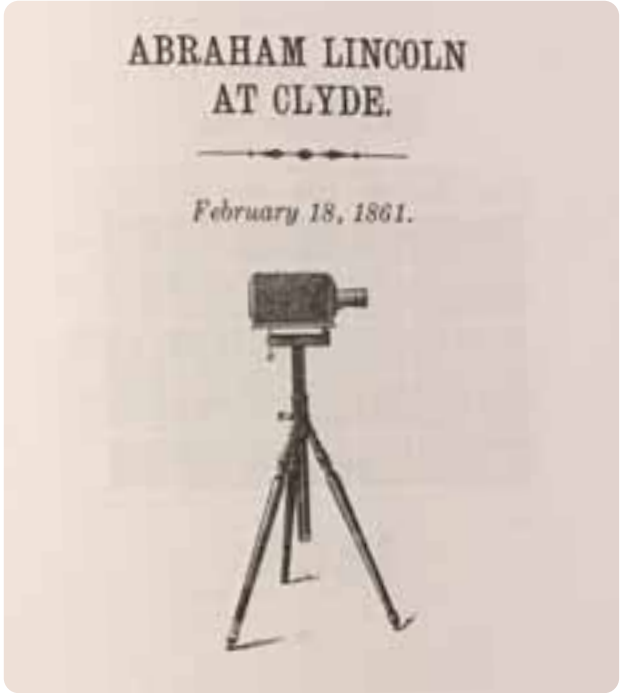
*"The granddaughters of William Stow, a leader in Clyde at the time of Lincoln's visit, had mentioned the photograph to a Mr. Butch Nicoletta at some point during the twentieth century, who in turn passed that information on to Mr. Morrison in the 1930s. The granddaughters were born between the late 1860s and 1880s."*

Morrison's wife, Pat, contributed to preserving this local history by publishing a children's book based on family memories of Lincoln's stop in Clyde.

Fagant noted: *"Photo information was obtained in discussions with Wayne Morrison, former resident of Clyde, now of Ovid, N.Y. and author of 'Morrison's History of Clyde, Wayne County, New York, 1860-1865.' The existence of the photograph may have a link from the past."*

Wayne Morrison's dedication to uncovering this piece of local history exemplifies the ongoing interest in Abraham Lincoln's life and travels.

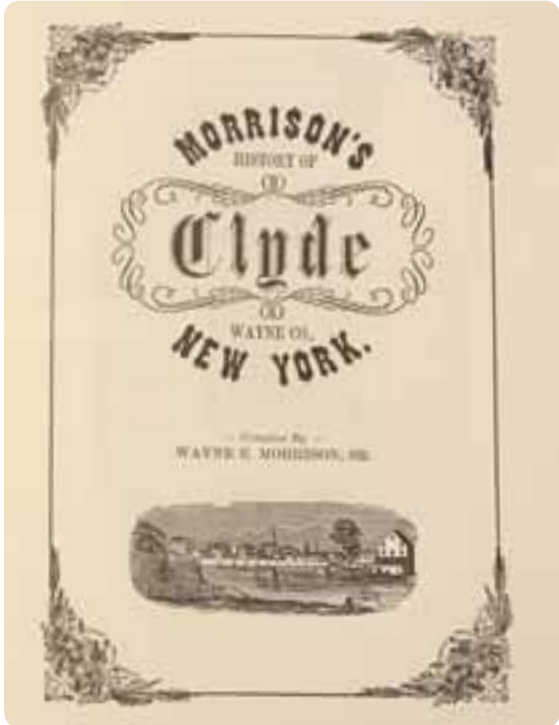
The mystery of the lost daguerreotype continues to captivate historians and locals alike, serving as a reminder of the rich historical tapestry of small-town America and its connections to national figures.



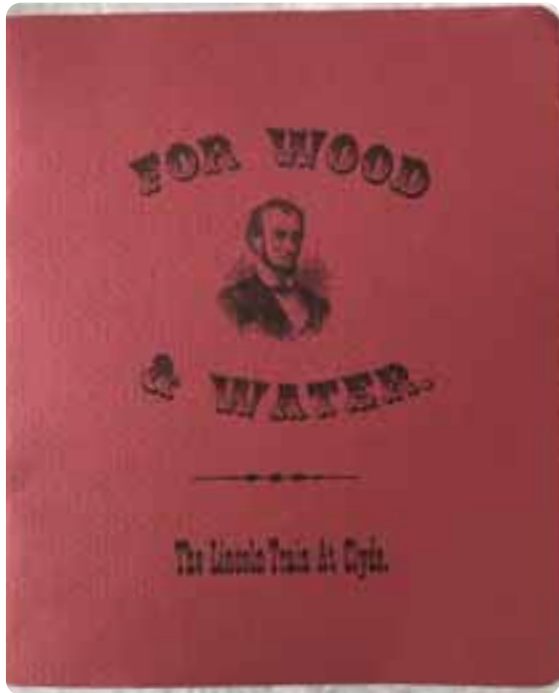
**Where is the photo Abe Lincoln in Clyde?  
Who took the photo?**



These are the questions that intrigue Wayne Morrison Sr. Wayne must confess that the lost photo did not get his attention at first. He would be working away at his press in his Clyde days, when Alphonsus "Butch" Nicoletta would come in and exude excitement as he talked about the photo. Eventually, Wayne caught the "bug" from Butch, and we see here some of the files and piles that Wayne has collected on subjects related to the photo. One of his boxes holds research on photographers in Clyde and surrounding towns in the period from 1844 to 1900. Another box holds clippings related to the Lincoln inauguration trip in 1861. Another box has information about Lincoln and the girl that thought he would look good in a beard.



• *History of Clyde, 4th edition photographically printed*



• *For Wood and Water, 2012. Patricia Wright Morrison's typographically assembled children book illustrated by her friend Christine Bramer Lauster, ""*

The visit of Lincoln in Clyde, seen through the eyes of a young boy, Aaron Pettys, whose young brother Abraham Lincoln Pettys was born on 26 Dec. 26 1860.

<sup>1</sup> Morrison, Wayne E. *"Morrison's History of Clyde, Wayne Co., New York."* 5<sup>th</sup> edition, 1980

<sup>2</sup> Fagant, John. *"The Best of the Bargain: Lincoln's Journey to Washington."* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2010





• A Visit to Perkins Block, Clyde, Wayne Co., July 2017

• XII •

## INVESTIGATING A PHOTOGRAPHER AND HIS NOTABLE PATRON

- *A Single Daguerreian Gallery*
- *Roberts' Story Remains an Open Case*
- *Greeley's Mysterious Clyde Correspondent*
- *William Stow's Family Papers*
- *The Stow Sisters' Secret: Guardians of the Lost Image ?*

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# A SINGLE DAGUERREIAN GALLERY

The village of Clyde, like many small American towns, had a single photographic studio that saw a succession of operators. Wayne Morrison’s research provides a detailed account of the photographers who worked in Clyde’s Daguerreian Gallery <sup>1, 2</sup>:

*“J. P. Van Deusen is believed to have been the first resident Daguerreotype artist, commencing in November 1850 in Liberty Hall, aloft in the Redfield Block on Glasgow Street. Edward W. Stiles followed in February 1851, operating his Daguerreotype room over Pardee & Elliott’s store on Glasgow Street. Three years later, he relocated to the Clyde Hotel, offering pictures taken by either skylight or side light. By early 1856, Stiles had moved to the Perkins Block, where he continued for a few years before partnering with his brother-in-law as butchers under the name Schoonmaker & Stiles by 1860.*

*Thomas Stead advertised briefly in The Clyde Times, starting May 21, 1859, as did William Hendricks for nearly a year beginning June 18, 1859...*”

The narrative then focuses on John B. Roberts (1837-1869), who purchased William Hendricks’ Daguerreian Rooms in the Perkins Block in spring 1860. At 23 years old, Roberts arrived from a brief stint in Palmyra, birthplace of the *Latter Day Saint* movement, where he had advertised his services as village photographer on 18 January 1860<sup>1, 3</sup>.

John Roberts had received excellent training from his father, William Roberts, one of Rochester’s pioneering photographers.

*“Roberts advertised as having a large, new instrument for use expressly in the making of photographs, either portraits or of dwelling-houses and grounds. My rooms are pleasant, and easy of access, being up but one flight of stairs; and those wishing pictures will find it to their advantage to give me a call.”*

Roberts advertised his services for portraits and photographs of buildings and grounds.

During the 1860 presidential campaign, he photographed Horace Greeley, editor of the *New-York Tribune*.

The business was later managed by William H. Naracon and his wife Velona, John B. Roberts’ sister, upon his definitive relocation to Rochester in fall 1865. John B. Roberts started returning to Rochester in 1864, establishing a collodion studio at 58 State Street, registered as “J.B. Roberts and Co” from 1864 to 1868, until illness forced him to leave Rochester. <sup>1, 2</sup>



• John B. Roberts, selfportrait circa 1861



• Perkins Block in 2017 (n°57 on plan). Daguerreian Gallery at upper floor



• From Perkins Block (red circle), Glasgow street with South Park to Passenger Depot (blue circle), walking distance is 15’

<sup>1</sup> Morrison, Wayne E. “Morrison’s History of Clyde, Wayne County, New York.” 1969

<sup>2</sup> The PIC, “Photographers’ Identities Catalog.” New York Public Library

<sup>3</sup> Fagant, John. “The Best of the Bargain: Lincoln’s Journey to Washington.” Albany, NY: State Univ. of New York Press, 2010



# ROBERTS' STORY REMAINS AN OPEN CASE

Despite the scarcity of biographical details and surviving photographs of John B. Roberts, his short but impactful career suggests a photographer of considerable talent and creativity. Several aspects of his work hint at the possibility of his authorship of the elusive Lincoln daguerreotype in Clyde <sup>1,2</sup>:

Roberts demonstrated a penchant for creative and daring photographic projects. He captured portraits of Reis Grimsley and Irish revolutionaries planning to invade Canada <sup>3</sup>.

His attempt to establish himself among the Mormons and the Latter-day Church indicates adaptability and a willingness to explore diverse communities.

Following Lincoln's assassination, Roberts endeavored to create an exceptional portrait of the late president, possibly using a Gardner image as reference. This effort underscores his skill and reverence for Lincoln. «*We have before us a large sized photograph of the late President, from an original negative by Gardner... from a sitting on February last.*» <sup>4</sup>

A potential self-portrait showing Roberts with a false beard and stovepipe hat, mimicking Lincoln's appearance, further demonstrates his admiration for the president.

While few of Roberts' photographs have been identified, three collections preserve his work, Roberts family album containing portraits of family members, Cartes de visite at George Eastman House, Portraits of Fenians, possibly linked to his potential Irish heritage. Roberts' connection to Fenian <sup>3</sup> portraits is intriguing, given the contemporaneous rise of Irish nationalism and the British suppression of nationalist groups around 1865.

Roberts returned to Rochester in 1864, establishing a collodion studio that operated until 1868. His career was cut short by illness, leading to his death on May 30, 1869, at the young age of 31 years and 9 months. The *Clyde Times*' obituary hints at the community's fondness for the young photographe<sup>1</sup> : "J. B. Roberts, a former resident of this village, but now of Rochester, Monroe Co., died in that city on Sunday last (30 May 1869)... at the age of thirty-one years and nine months. Mr. Roberts had been suffering from a pulmonary difficulty for several months, and spent a part of the last year in Minnesota, vainly hoping to derive benefit from a change of climate, and his decease, though not unexpected, will cause regret among all who knew him..." <sup>1, 2</sup>

The brief career of John B. Roberts presents a compelling enigma in mid-19th century American photography. His untimely death at 31 left behind a sparse trail of evidence - a handful of identified images, cryptic newspaper mentions, and tantalizing connections to historically significant events. His story remains an open case.

<sup>1</sup> "Obituary of J. B. Roberts." The Clyde Times, June 1869

<sup>2</sup> Morrison, Wayne E., Sr. Historian of Clyde, New York

<sup>3</sup> Gantt, Jonathan. "Fenian Terrorism Confronts the Atlantic Community, 1865-1870." London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010

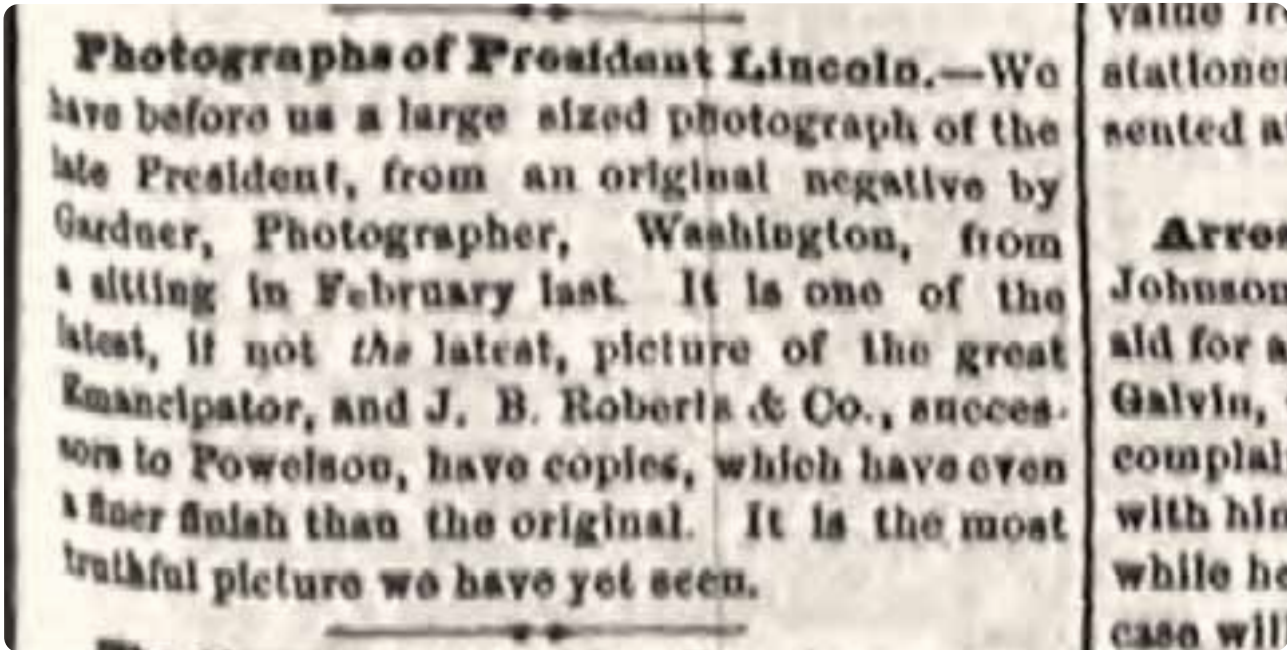
<sup>4</sup> Rochester NY Evening Express, 10 May 1865. J. B. Roberts proposes enlargements of Lincoln last portrait



• John. B. Roberts mourning Lincoln ?, 1865  
collection Geirge Eastmann House, Rochester



• J. B. Roberts, Portrait of Fenian militant W. R. Roberts, ca 1865  
courtesy Neil MacDonald, Rare photo Gallery, Toronto



• J. B. Roberts proposes enlargements of the last portrait of Lincoln, Rochester NY Evening Express, 10 May 1865



# GREELEY’S MYSTERIOUS CORRESPONDENT

n October 1860, Horace Greeley, a prominent editor of the New-York Tribune, visited Clyde, New York, an event that holds significance for the local political landscape of the time. <sup>1</sup>

Greeley’s visit was noted in the *Clyde Weekly Times*, which reported that he arrived on 19 October 1860, and was escorted by the Wide Awakes to the residence of William S. Stow, a key figure in Clyde’s development and a strong supporter of the Republican Party. <sup>2</sup>

«**Hon. Horace Greeley at Clyde:** Hon Horace Greeley arrived here on the mail train from the east on Friday morning 19 October 1860 escorted by the Wide Awakes to the residence of Wm. S. Stow, esq» (The *Clyde Weekly Times*, 27 October 1860) <sup>2</sup>

William S. Stow was married to Maria de Zeng, daughter of Baron Frederick de Zeng, and played a significant role in founding and developing Clyde alongside his brother-in-law, William Steuben de Zeng. Both were influential boosters for the Republican cause during a politically charged era leading up to Abraham Lincoln’s presidency.

The local tradition in Clyde suggests that a daguerreotype of Abraham Lincoln might have been associated with DeLancey Stow, a relative of William S. Stow. This daguerreotype was reportedly offered to Alfonso “Butch” Nicoletta by Stow’s granddaughters in the 20th century. Nicoletta was a notable figure in Clyde, known for his collection of memorabilia.

Abraham Lincoln’s train did indeed stop in Clyde on February 18, 1861, as he traveled to his inauguration. The stop was brief, primarily for wood and water—a common necessity for steam trains at the time—but it has fueled speculation about whether Lincoln intended to meet with influential figures like William S. Stow, who had hosted Horace Greeley just months earlier.

This connection between Greeley’s visit and Lincoln’s stop adds an intriguing layer to the historical narrative of Clyde and its role in the broader political movements of the period.

This visit by Horace Greeley represents a critical juncture in our timeline, potentially linking national political figures, local Clyde personalities, and the mysterious Lincoln photograph. William Stow appears to have played a forgotten but relatively important role in 19th-century New York State history, and his archives can be found at the New York Public Library. <sup>2, 3, 4</sup>



• William S. Stow



• William S. DeZeng, brother-in-law



• Delancey Stow Insurance Office - built 1825 by William Stow for his legal practice and his insurance business in the thriving canal town of Clyde, NY in 1825. The Erie Canal had just been completed when William Stow set up his ventures in the village. Life insurance might come along later, but William Stow did well enough selling fire, accident and marine insurance.

<sup>1</sup>“Hon. Horace Greeley at Clyde.” The *Clyde Weekly Times*, 27 October 1860  
<sup>2</sup>Morrison, Wayne E., Sr. Historian of Clyde, New York  
<sup>3</sup>Stow Family Papers. Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library  
<sup>4</sup>Fagant, John. “*The Best of the Bargain: Lincoln’s Journey to Washington*.” Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2010

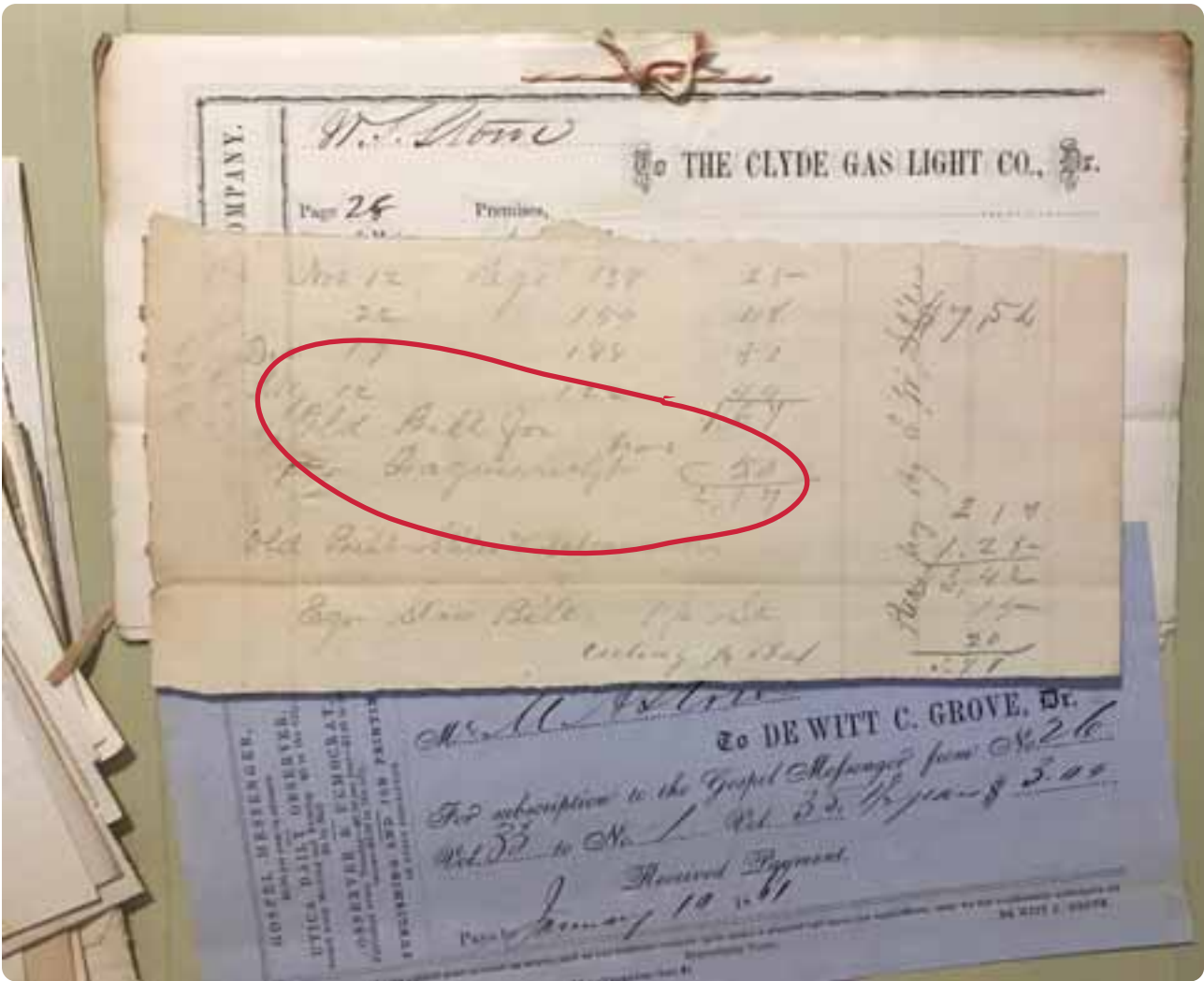


# WILLIAM STOW'S FAMILY PAPERS

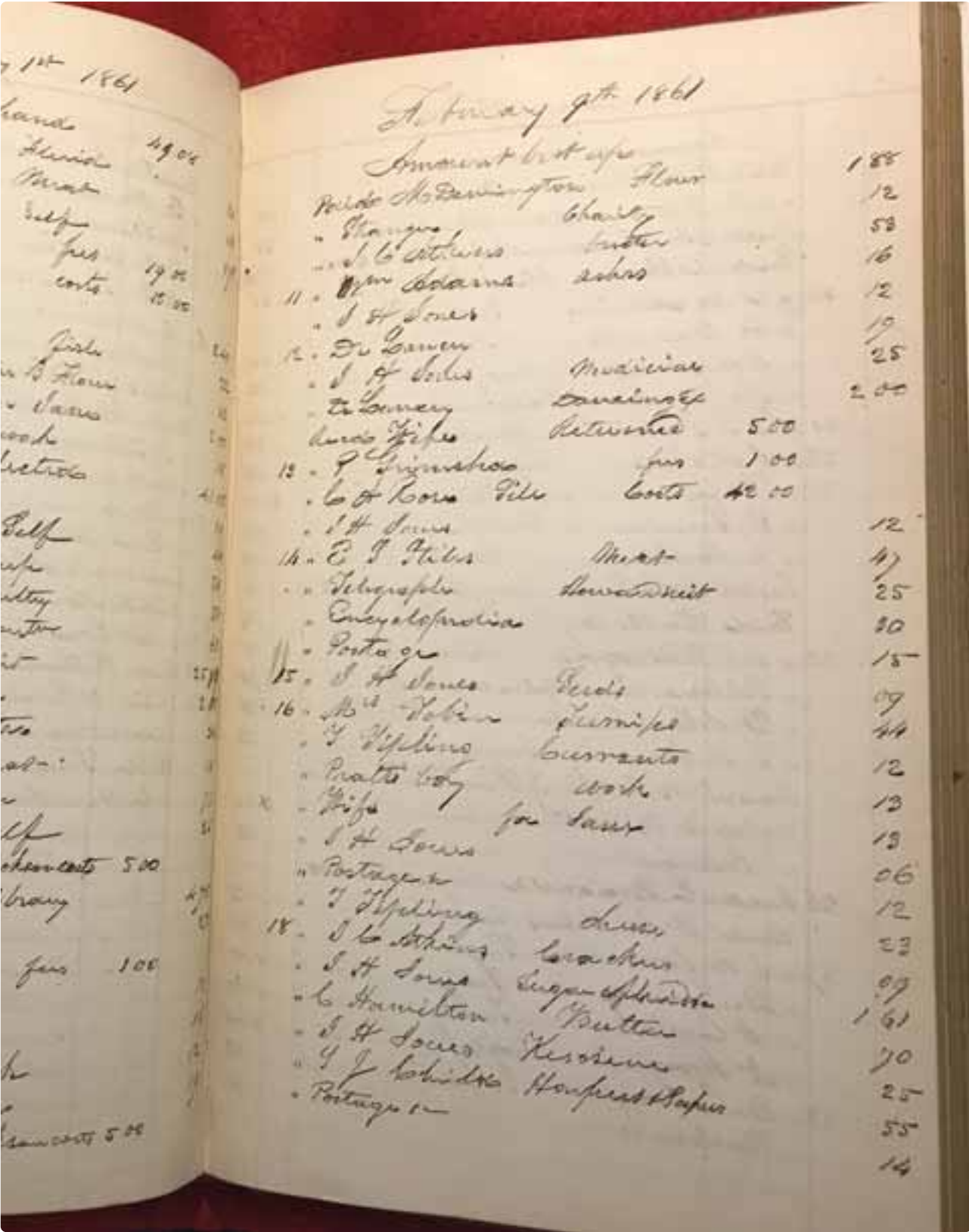
William Stow's granddaughters, the daughters of his only son DeLancey Stow (1841-1925), played a crucial role in preserving their family's history, Mary Alice (born 1871), Agnes (born 1873), Edith (born 1881)\*.

After their father's death, these women took the significant step of donating all the family papers to the New York Public Library.

The name of John B. Roberts doesn't appear, but a loose note within the end papers of the 1860-1861 diary mentions sums and corrections, one sum due to Mr. Stiles, described as a "good man" of William Stow, and another for a "daguerreotype."



• Mention of a Bill for Daguerreotype, Stow Family Papers. Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.



• February 1861 Notebook, Stow Family Papers. Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.



# THE STOW SISTERS' SECRET

Wayne Morrison Sr.'s quest for the lost Lincoln daguerreotype from Clyde is a fascinating historical mystery. Hugh Miner 2000 account highlights the challenges of historical research based on oral traditions and the potential for unexpected discoveries in preserving local history.<sup>1, 2</sup>

*“Wayne Morrison Sr. has a dream that he inherited from Butch Nicoletta. Would the photo of Clyde ever turn up? Butch reported to Wayne a conversation he had at the Stow residence. He was working on the grounds of the sisters Agnes and Mary Alice Stow when they mentioned that they had once seen the photograph of Lincoln. This may have been in the 1930s. And that is where the trail ends... unless a reader of this article, someday, comes forward with more evidence.*

*Wayne is not satisfied with just hoping to see the photograph. He is researching other aspects of the Lincoln visit as well. He would like to figure out who the photographer might have been. The one known in Clyde at the time was a Mr. J. B. Roberts. And Wayne and Pat were looking at some old books in Geneva one day and decided to buy an old album, because the people in it were identified. In the album was a picture of Mr. Roberts!*

*Wayne dares not make the assumption that Mr. Roberts of Clyde was the photographer mentioned in the news accounts. If he were, would he not include it in his local advertising in the months and years afterwards? Was a photographer from Lyons or Wolcott? There are no good leads. The photograph of Mr. Pain, the editor of the newspaper variously called The Clyde Times and The Clyde Weekly Times came when Wayne and Pat went to Pennsylvania to visit the granddaughter of Mr. Pain.*

*Joseph Pain left Clyde in Nov. 1865 and moved to Corry, PA where he started a newspaper because of his interest in the new oil fields. She generously supplied the picture of Joseph Pain, but she knew nothing of his locally famous handshake. Anyone interested in photographs of Abraham Lincoln does well to consult the publications of Lloyd Ostendorf of Dayton, Ohio.*

*Mr. Ostendorf has experienced many special events in his research as well<sup>1, 3</sup>. One of them occurred after he gave a speech about Lincoln, and a woman came up afterward to say that she had a Bible autographed by Lincoln. Mr. Ostendorf did not hold his breath, because “nine times out of ten” it is not authentic. This one was, however, and it was a Bible that had been the property of the daughter of an Ohio state senator, who asked Mr. Lincoln to autograph the Bible for his daughter. In the Bible, Lincoln writes to Miss Annie Harries, “Live by the words within these covers and you will be forever happy.” It was signed “A. Lincoln” on September 17, 1859. Maybe such a remark as that one can be spoken by someone with knowledge of Lincoln’s Clyde visit. In this editor’s conversation with Mr. Ostendorf (on February 12<sup>th</sup>), Mr. Ostendorf said that when any new information comes out about Abraham Lincoln, it is usually near February 12, Lincoln’s birthday. That is when the interest peaks each year.*

February 17, 2000

The Crossroads Advocate

## The Lost Photo of Abraham Lincoln

1861

Lost photograph (type unknown), cameraman unknown, Clyde, New York, Monday, February 18, 1861.

According to a *New York Times* reporter, a photographer had set up his camera on a woodpile near the train tracks so that he could take a picture of the President-elect when the train stopped at the canal port of Clyde for five minutes (8:44 to 8:49 A.M.). The *New York Times* and the *Buffalo Express* stated that the photographer got “pictures of the rear end of the car, of Mr. Lincoln, Mr. Wood, a brakeman and a . . . reporter.”

These pictures have never been found.



1861

(M-35) O-43

Photograph by Christopher S. German, Springfield, Saturday, February 9, 1861.

The above is courtesy of Lloyd Ostendorf whose book *Lincoln's Photographs: A Complete Album* was printed by Rockywood Press of Dayton, Ohio, in 1998. This is the top half of page 395.

Wayne Morrison Sr. has a dream that he inherited from Butch Nicoletta. Would the photo of Clyde ever turn up? Butch reported to Wayne a conversation he had at the Stow residence. He was working on the grounds of the sisters Agnes and Mary Alice Stow when they mentioned that they had once seen the photograph of Lincoln. This may have been in the 1930's. And that is where the trail ends ... unless a reader of this article, some day, comes forward with more evidence.

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Wayne Morrison hopes that the interest will continue to peak. It doesn't have to be just the appearance of the lost photograph.

*Maybe one day someone will look through an old diary and find someone's record of Lincoln's visit and it will provide more leads to pursue. Stranger things have happened. We hope to say more on this mystery and the detective work of Wayne Morrison in a future issue. Maybe one of you readers holds a key to unlock the mystery of the lost photograph.”*

Hugh Miner's article, *The Crossroads Advocate*, 17 February 2000, can be summarized:

The existence of this daguerreotype is primarily based on the memories of Agnes and Mary Alice Stow, William Stow's granddaughters. They reportedly mentioned having seen the photograph, possibly in the 1930s, during a conversation with Butch Nicoletta, who later relayed this information to Wayne Morrison.

<sup>1</sup> Miner, Hugh. “The Mystery of the Lost Lincoln Photograph.” *The Crossroads Advocate*, 17 Feb. 2000

<sup>3</sup> Ostendorf, Lloyd. Lincoln researcher and author. Personal communication, 12 February 2000

<sup>2</sup> Morrison, Wayne E., Sr. Personal research and interviews. Historian of Clyde, New York





• XIII •

## EXAMINING THE SUBJECT DAGUERREOTYPE

- *Leather Case and Brass Frame*
- *Inspecting the Unframed Plate*
- *Sixth Plate: An Affordable Format*
- *Hallmark in Lower Left Corner*
- *Tarnish: Created by Heating Mishandling ?*
- *Tilted Perspective: Uneven Camera Positioning*
- *High-Definition Digitization Process*

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# LEATHER CASE AND BRASS FRAME

We begin our study of the subject daguerreotype by measuring and analyzing the small case that protects it.

**Dimensions of the leather case: 94 x 80 x 14 mm**

**Dimensions of the brass frame: 82 x 70 mm**

The gilt brass mat separates the image surface from the cover glass.

Around 1850, a preserver was added to the mat of the daguerreotype, which surrounds the plate and further seals and bonds the mat, cover glass, and plate, reinforcing the paper seal.

**Dimensions of the plate: 77 x 64 mm**

Observations:

The leather case and brass frame are certainly genuine and vintage but present two interventions:

The cover glass has been cleaned and retaped by a recent owner on “31 October 2016”.

The leather hinge, having been broken at some remote date, was fixed by a previous owner with a barely adequate cloth hinge.

There are no identifying marks on the case, cushion, or preserver.

The modest appearance and size of this portrait do not correspond to a portrait of an important person, an inhabitant of a large city frequenting famous studios. Instead, it aligns with what we know of the productions of small-town photographers, conforming in every way to what was provided to clients by a Daguerrian gallery in a community in eastern New York State around 1860.

**Dating the Subject Daguerreotype:** the case and preserver are similar to the late period daguerreotypes, after 1850<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>Rinhart, Floyd & Marion, “The American Daguerreotype”, 1981



• Leather casing, Actual size



• Actual size



• brass mat

• preserver

• coverglass

• red velvet framing

• Actual size Case: 94x80x14 mm, plate: 77x64 mm



# INSPECTING THE UNFRAMED PLATE

Based on the detailed examination of the daguerreotype, we can draw several conclusions about its characteristics and likely date of creation:

The daguerreotype is a sixth plate, measuring 3” x 2½” (77 x 64 mm), which was a common size for portraits during the daguerreotype era. The plate exhibits several notable features:

- A hallmark in the lower left corner, indicating the plate manufacturer or supplier
- Irregular left perimeter due to imprecise cutting and bending
- Beveled edge for easier handling during the creation process and to reduce damage to polishing tools <sup>1</sup>
- Unusual patina and extreme tarnish
- Oxidation spots of various colors in the lower left part
- Partial solarization in the white zone of the shirt

These characteristics, particularly the tarnish and oxidation, are consistent with the aging process of daguerreotypes over time.

**Dating the Subject Daguerreotype:** Several factors help narrow down the possible date range for this daguerreotype:

By 1861, most U.S. photographers had abandoned daguerreotypes for the wet plate method. 1861 marked the end of the daguerreotype era in the U.S.: *“Soon daguerreotype era was over — Ten years ago we had here (in the North) only Daguerreotypes, now not one”* <sup>2</sup>.

The distribution of necessary chemicals for daguerreotype production (iodine, bromide, mercury) ended abruptly around this time.

Abraham Lincoln began growing a beard in early November 1860 but didn’t have a full beard until after his February 1861 inauguration. The new bearded image of Lincoln became widely known after February 1861. By spring/summer 1861, when Lincoln’s supporters began adopting bearded appearances, daguerreotype supplies were largely exhausted.

Given these factors, we can deduce that this daguerreotype portrait likely predates Lincoln’s “Public Persona” image with a full beard. The most probable date range for this daguerreotype is between the early 1850s and late 1860, before Lincoln’s beard became iconic and while daguerreotypes were still the dominant photographic medium.

The physical characteristics of the plate, including the hallmark and signs of aging, further support this timeframe.

This dating places the daguerreotype firmly within the later period of daguerreotype production in the United States, just before the transition to wet plate collodion processes became widespread.

<sup>1</sup> Conservation experts note that beveled edges and clipped corners (usually all four) on daguerreotype plates serve multiple purposes. In addition to easier handling, these features reduce the likelihood of the plate damaging or cutting into the polishing sticks during the polishing process.

<sup>2</sup> *American Journal of Photography*, October 15, 1861, quoted by Beaumont Newhall, *The Daguerreotype in America*)



# SIXTH PLATE: AN AFFORDABLE FORMAT

The sixth plate format, measuring 2.75 by 3.25 inches (approximately 70 x 83 mm), became the most common and affordable size for daguerreotype portraits. This format gained popularity as it offered a good balance between image quality and cost-effectiveness. It was particularly favored by everyday citizens and itinerant daguerreotypists due to its accessibility.

The affordability of the sixth plate format is evident in its pricing. In the 1850s, a sixth plate daguerreotype typically cost between \$1 to \$2.00

T. P. and D. C. Collins of Philadelphia <sup>1</sup> advertised their prices in the mid-1840s:

\$1.50 for their standard daguerreotype, while others charged \$3.00. They guaranteed “*satisfaction or no charge*” (*North American*, Sept. 24, 1846, and Mar. 18, 1847)

By 1853, the Collins firm offered a tiered pricing structure:

- \$1.50 for a “medium” plate (quarter-plate)
- \$2.00 for a “medium fine plate”
- \$1.25 for a one-sixteenth plate daguerreotype

(*Collins Registers*, Mar. 7 and 20, and Oct. 8, 1853)

## Subject daguerreotype analysis

The plate correspond to the most affordable format of decent size, very small dags were produced to be mounted as jewelry, like sixteenth plates at 0,50.

## Clyde's situation

This format corresponds to the practices of village photographers going West, who would have favored affordable and portable options for their clientele.

The sixth plate’s popularity among itinerant photographers and its affordability for everyday citizens make it a likely choice for a small-town setting like Clyde, Wayne Co.

PRICE LIST			
— OF —			
KEYWOOD'S MAMMOTH			
Daguerreotype & Ambrotype			
GALLERY.			
228 Washington Street.			
Cor. Summer Street . . BOSTON.			
Daguerreotypes		Ambrotypes	
At	\$0.25	At	\$0.50
"	0.50	"	0.75
"	1.00	"	1.00
"	1.25	"	1.25
"	1.50	"	1.50
"	2.00	"	2.00
"	3.00	"	3.00
"	5.00	"	5.00
"	10.00	"	10.00

<sup>1</sup> “Thomas Painter Collins and David Chittenden Collins 1855». International Center of Photography. “David C. Collins.” produced approximately 23,000 images between 1845 and ICP.org



• Real sizes, Sixth Plate, Quarter Plate, Half Plate



# HALLMARK IN LOWER LEFT CORNER

The presence and positioning of hallmarks on daguerreotype plates provide valuable information about their origin and composition. In this case, we are fortunate to have identified a hallmark, albeit not very legible, on the subject daguerreotype.

A scientific catalogue of daguerreian plates hallmarks has been updated in 2014 by Gabriele Chiesa & Gianpaolo Gosio, “*Daguerreotype Hallmarks Table*”<sup>1</sup>.

The hallmark found can be compared with “*Asterisk Gaudin Doublé 40*”, “*Asterisk JP Doublé 30*” and “*Asterisk JP Doublé 40*”, examples found on some Southworth & Hawes Daguerreian images.

The French word “*Doublé*” refers to a process where a base metal is covered with a precious metal, in this case, a silver-plated copper plate. The moon symbol was used by alchemists and pewterers to represent silver. The numbers “30” or “40” indicate the ratio of silver to copper in the plating process. For example, “40” would mean 1 part silver to 40 parts copper, representing the thickness of the silver coating on the copper base.<sup>1</sup>

Floyd and Marion Rinhart, in the *New Daguerreian Journal*, discuss the spread of French plates in the United States:

“Sometime in the later 1840’s, in about 1848, a number of French daguerreotype plates, led by H. B. brand, followed closely by J. P. and Gaudin brands, began flooding the American market in ever-increasing numbers. By 1850 the French plates had captured the American market.... Unlike the French manufacturers, they did not have to stamp the silver content (usually 1/40 thick) on their offerings to the trade.”<sup>2</sup>

By 1850, Scovill’s New York store alone imported 120,000 French plates: “Many daguerreotypists bought whole plates and cut them to whatever size was needed for their daily practice. With a limited amount of capital expended, they could cut six ‘one-sixth’ size plates from a whole plate with only 1/4” x 6 1/2” theoretical waste.”<sup>2</sup>

Analysis of subject daguerreotype: The plate exhibits a hallmark characteristic of French-manufactured plates, which were widely used in the United States by the 1850s.

Relevance to Clyde’s situation: The presence of this French plate hallmark aligns with the common practices of daguerreotypists in New York state during this period, including those operating in smaller towns like Clyde. This suggests that even photographers in less urban areas had access to and regularly used imported French plates in their work.

<sup>1</sup> Chiesa, Gabriele & Gosio, Gianpaolo, “*Daguerreotype Hallmarks Table*”, accessed 5 January 2025 <https://archfoto.tripod.com/hallmark.html?t>

<sup>2</sup> Rinhart, Floyd & Marrion, «*Notes on the Daguerreotype Plate*», *New Daguerreian Journal*, vol. 3, n° 2, Jan.1975, p. 5



• Hallmark on the Subject Daguerreotype



• 90° rotation, enlargement



• Chiesa & Gosio, Asterisk Gaudin Doublé 40 example



• Chiesa & Gosio, Asterisk J - P Doublé example



# TARNISH: CREATED BY MISHANDLING

Daguerreian plates often exhibit some regular tarnish around the edges, or wherever a protective glass has been broken, but the subject daguerreotype displays unusual colorful silver variations <sup>1</sup>. This tarnish is not a result of aging or later deterioration, but a direct consequence of original manipulation, specifically mishandling during the heating process.

To better understand the plate, we decided to learn the daguerreian process <sup>2</sup> and create a similar portrait, following Mrs. Cobb's advice from the Library of Congress: *"Try to engrave something yourself according to the old methods of hand work."* <sup>3</sup>The daguerreian process involves several steps:

- 1. Polishing a silver-plated copper sheet to a mirror finish
- 2. Fuming the plate to render it light sensitive (usually iodine and bromine)
- 3. Exposing it in a camera in front of your subject
- 4. Developing the latent image with mercury vapour
- 5. Fixing the image and gilding
- 6. *Drying with heat of a candle*
- 7. Adding a mat and sealing behind glass before placing in the final enclosure.



• 1. Patient polishing



• 2. Fuming the plate



• 3. Exposing the plate



• 4. Develoèing the latent image



• 5. Fixing and gilding



• 6. Drying

<sup>1</sup> Barger, M. Susan, and William B. White. *"The Daguerreotype: Nineteenth-Century Technology and Modern Science."* Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000

<sup>2</sup> We participated in a workshop led by Mike Robinson in July

2017, in Kolomna Monastery, learning more from failures than successes

<sup>3</sup> Advice given to Harold Holzer, *«The Lincoln Visual Image: A Personal Journey of Discovery»*

The subject daguerreotype's unusual colorful silver variations and weird tendrils of tarnish creating a rainbow frame of colors are likely the result of mishandling during the heating process, specifically during **phase 6** of the daguerreotype creation. This type of tarnish is not a result of aging or later deterioration but a direct consequence of original manipulation.

The green eruptions along the bottom of the plate are particularly noteworthy. Such effects can occur when the plate is unevenly heated or exposed to contaminants during the drying phase. Once these effects are created, they become permanent, as even the lightest wiping can permanently affect the delicate surface of a daguerreotype.

In Clyde's situation, the cold outdoor temperatures may have necessitated warming the plate in a stove before placing it in the mercury box. This additional handling, combined with the time pressure of the departing train, could have led to the unique tarnish patterns observed. The photographer, unable to retake the portrait due to the President-elect's departure, was forced to preserve the image despite its imperfections.

This daguerreotype serves as a rare example of preserved processing accidents, as the typical practice was to re-polish and reuse plates with tarnish. Its preservation offers valuable insights into the challenges faced by 19<sup>th</sup>-century photographers working under less-than-ideal conditions.



• Unusual and weird tendrils of tarnish creating a rainbow frame of colors



# TILTED PERSPECTIVE

Early photographers often faced significant challenges when working outside of controlled studio environments, particularly in event photography or situations with limited time and resources. These challenges frequently led to improvised setups that could affect the final image.

**Subject daguerreotype analysis:** the model is centered in the frame. There is a noticeable tilt of approximately  $-3^\circ$  angle to the orthonormal reference frame.

**Clyde's situation:** The tilted perspective in the daguerreotype can be attributed to the challenging conditions faced by the photographer in Clyde. According to the *New York Times* reporter, the photographer placed his tripod "on a convenient wood-pile"<sup>1</sup>. However, convenience did not necessarily equate to stability or levelness. Moreover, the uneven surface of the wood pile, together with the time constraints and the very cold weather, limited setup optimization.

This improvised setup reflects the resourcefulness required of early photographers, who often had to balance technical requirements with practical limitations. The resulting tilt in the image provides insight into the real-world challenges faced by daguerreotypists working outside of controlled studio environments.



The presence of this tilt also offers a glimpse into the authentic conditions of the time, adding a layer of historical context to the photograph.

It serves as a reminder of the technical and logistical hurdles that early photographers had to overcome, particularly when documenting significant events or figures in less-than-ideal settings.

<sup>1</sup>The *New York Times*, 19 February 1861



# HIGH-DEFINITION DIGITIZATION PROCESS

To thoroughly examine the subject daguerreotype, we asked young scholar Aurelien Vila to create several high-definition images of the bare plate, removed from its frame and protective glass. This process involved experimenting with different lighting and contrast settings to capture a wide range of details.

Since the 2000s, with the rise of digital technologies, numerous new techniques based on photography have emerged. These advancements have pushed the boundaries of photography and provided access to new types of data beyond what traditional imaging sensors can capture. Among these techniques, Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI) allows for the modeling of how an object or scene interacts with light. While this technique enables us to explore variations in contrast and viewing angles, here we focus solely on a neutral, balanced digitization <sup>1</sup>.

**Lighting and Contrast:** We generated images with varying brightness and contrast levels to highlight different features of the daguerreotype.

**Lateral Reversal Correction:** Daguerreotypes are typically mirror images because they are viewed from the side that originally faced the camera lens. We digitally reversed the images using horizontal symmetry to correct this.

**Tilt Correction:** A slight 3° clockwise rotation was applied to correct the original tilt observed in the daguerreotype.

This approach allows us to compare the subject daguerreotype with studio portraits of Abraham Lincoln, free from mirror effects or unbalanced camera angles.



<sup>1</sup> Pamart, A., Guillon, O., Vila, A., & de Luca, L. *Massive image-based digitization strategies in the framework of Notre-Dame de Paris scientific worksite*. In *Disegni, modelli, architettura, storia*

*dell'arte : lo studio storico e la restitution virtuale nell'era delle digital humanities*, 19-20 October 2017, Firenze





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## PHYSICAL EVIDENCES

- *Beaver Stovepipe*
- *Mourning Ribbon*
  - *Over-Coat*
- *Outdated Collar Shape*
  - *Visible Shadows*
- *Empty Looking Background*

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# BEAVER STOVEPIPE

The comparison between the subject daguerreotype model and President-Elect Lincoln's attire during his inaugural journey could reveals significant pieces of evidence, particularly regarding his stovepipe hat. The *New York Times* article of 19 February 1861, vividly describes Abraham Lincoln's appearance during his journey to Washington: *"During the entire trip Mr. Lincoln has worn a shocking bad hat..."* This unflattering headwear and tired clothing persisted until noon on February 18, 1861. The article continues, *"Shortly after leaving Utica, Mrs. Lincoln gave an order to William the color servant... Since then Mr. Lincoln looked fifty per cent better..."*<sup>1</sup>

Notably, just three hours after the stop in Clyde, Abraham Lincoln exchanged his *"shocking bad hat"* for an elegant new one<sup>2</sup>. No known portraits of Lincoln wearing a stovepipe hat exist before his arrival in New York City on the afternoon of 19 February. The *New York Times* article precisely pinpoints when the President-Elect first donned one of his elegant black stovepipes—an image that would become legendary—on 18 February, around noon.

Lincoln's stature and his iconic hat are described thus by the Smithsonian instutution: *"Abraham Lincoln was our tallest president. At 6-foot-4, he would stand out even today, and he certainly towered over the men and women of his era. The top hat he habitually wore in public made him taller still. You couldn't miss him in a crowd. The 16<sup>th</sup> president wore the top hat in war and peace, on the stump and in Washington, on occasions formal and informal. He wore it the night he was assassinated..."*

After February 19, 1861, outdoor portraits consistently show President Lincoln with elegant black silk hats. These hats were likely a gift from Mrs. Louisa Livingston Siemon, who had sent two stovepipes expressly made in New York for his inauguration. Lincoln's hat size corresponded to a 22-inch circumference.

While there's no direct evidence of Lincoln himself stating the origin of his hat, all accounts, including an autographed letter, suggest that the brand new hat worn by the President-Elect upon his arrival in New York on 19 February, was one of the two sent by Mrs. Siemon to Springfield on 10 December 1860.<sup>2</sup>

It's worth noting that when Lincoln left Springfield for Washington thirteen days earlier, he had sold most of his family's furniture at auction and took only minimal luggage. During the first days of his journey, he likely wore simple clothes, both to honor the common people who had voted for him and to cope with the smoke and dirt of early locomotives.

To fully understand the evolution of Lincoln's iconic headwear, we must compare the unusual beaver stovepipe with a mourning band image to the now venerable top hat preserved at the Smithsonian in Washington.

<sup>1</sup> The *New York Times*, February 19, 1861. *"Mr. Lincoln's Journey."* The train left Utica shortly after 11.34 AM on Monday 18 February 1861

<sup>2</sup> Autographed letter from Mrs. Louisa Livingston Siemon regarding the gift of stovepipe hats to Lincoln, New York, No. 207 East 23rd. St., 10 December 1860



• Subject daguerreotype, beaver stovepipe



• Lincoln last top hat on display at the Smithsonian, 2018



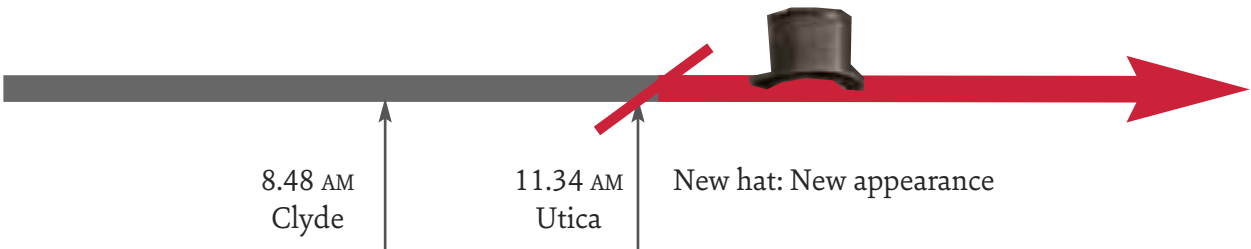
• Example I of black silk top hat, ca. 1859



• Example II of black silk top hat, ca. 1859



• Lincoln's Elegant stovepipe, 1862 (O-62)





# MOURNING RIBBON

The subject daguerreotype model is wearing a fur stovepipe, likely a beaver hat, with a large black silk mourning band. This detail is significant when compared to our knowledge of Abraham Lincoln’s attire during his inaugural journey and throughout his presidency.

According to the *New York Times* article, Lincoln wore a “*shocking bad hat*”<sup>1</sup> during most of his journey, until noon on February 18, 1861, when Mrs. Lincoln ordered an improvement in his appearance. Notably, this change occurred just three hours after the stop in Clyde.

However, none of the 130 known photographic portraits of Abraham Lincoln depict him wearing a hat with a mourning band during this period. The last portraits of Lincoln with a visible hat (without a mourning band) are from Antietam in October 1862. Lincoln is known to have added a silk mourning band after the death of his son Willie (February 20, 1862) and as the Civil War intensified.

Lincoln’s Known Mourning Hat, now kept at the Smithsonian, «*was acquired from J. Y. Davis, a Washington hat maker. It is approximately a modern size 7 1/8, trimmed with two bands: a thin 3/8” ribbon with a small metal buckle and a 3” grosgrain black mourning band (added later)*»<sup>2</sup>. This hat was worn on the day of his assassination.

Before 1861, while in Springfield, Lincoln could have added a mourning band after the death of his son Eddie (February 1, 1850) or, less probably, after the death of his father, Thomas Lincoln (January 17, 1851). However, there would have been no reason for the president-elect to put a mourning ribbon on a new hat during his inaugural journey.

If the hat in the subject daguerreotype is indeed Lincoln’s, it could potentially be 12 years old. Lincoln’s choice to wear an old hat during travel can be interpreted in several ways:

- Protection of newer clothing from the dirt and grime associated with 1860s train travel.
- Relatability: Wearing a “shocking bad hat” could have been a deliberate choice to appear more relatable to common people.
- Practicality: An old, familiar hat might have been more comfortable for extended travel.

The mourning band on this old hat could potentially be explained by:

- Reuse of old items: Lincoln, known for his frugality, might have repurposed an old mourning band on this travel hat.
- Previous mourning: If the hat was indeed over 12 years old, the band could have been added after the death of his son Eddie in 1850.



• Lincoln’s Known Mourning Hat, acquired from J. Y. Davis, a Washington hat maker, app. a modern size 7 1/8, trimmed with two bands: a thin 3/8” ribbon with a small metal buckle and a 3” grosgrain black mourning band (added later)  
The mourning band symbolically linked his personal loss with the nation’s wartime losses.

<sup>1</sup> The *New York Times*, February 19, 1861. “Mr. Lincoln’s Journey.”  
<sup>2</sup> Smithsonian Institution. Lincoln’s top hat in their collection



# OVER-COAT

The comparison between the subject daguerreotype model and President-Elect Lincoln’s attire during his inaugural journey reveals another intriguing piece of evidence when examining the over-coat.

## Subject Daguerreotype Analysis

- The model is wearing an old over-coat
- Depicted without a tie
- Low, soft, and slightly open collar

Abraham Lincoln’s Attire During the Inaugural Journey. The *New York Times* reported on February 19, 1861: “During the entire trip, Mr. Lincoln was noted for wearing what was described as a ‘shocking bad hat’ and a very thin, old over-coat.”<sup>1</sup>

This description aligns closely with the appearance of the subject in the daguerreotype, particularly the old over-coat.

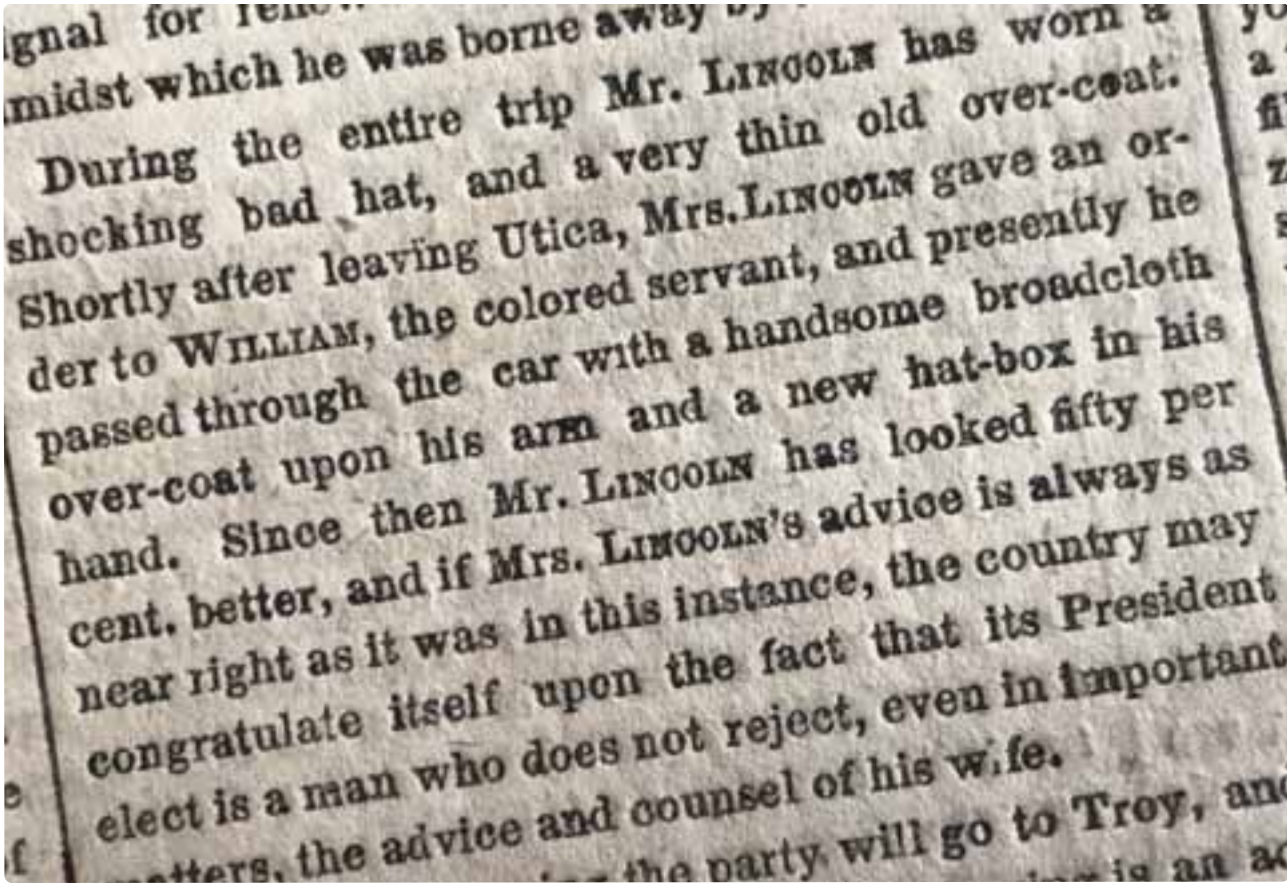
## Lincoln’s Attitude Towards Dress

Gibson Harris describes Lincoln’s “indifference to dress”: “He manifested no concern for his personal appearance, so far as dressiness went. Provided his clothing was clean and comfortable, the cut of it did not trouble him in the least.”<sup>2</sup>

Martin Rindlaub recalls Lincoln during the Douglas debates: “His black trousers, too, were so short that they gave an appearance of exaggerated size to his feet. He wore a high stove-pipe hat, somewhat the worse for wear, and he carried a gray woolen shawl, a garment much worn in those days instead of an over-coat.”<sup>3</sup>

These accounts paint a picture of Lincoln as someone who prioritized comfort and practicality over fashion, which is consistent with the appearance of the subject in the daguerreotype.

To gain more insight into President-elect Lincoln’s old over-coats, it would be valuable to examine his earlier portraits from approximately 7 or 15 years prior to this journey. This could provide a visual timeline of his attire and potentially reveal similarities to the over-coat seen in the subject daguerreotype.



• “Mr. Lincoln has worn a shocking bad hat, and a very thin old over-coat...” (The New York Times, 19 February 1861)



• Subject daguerreotype model the over-coat, detail

<sup>1</sup> The *New York Times*, February 19, 1861.  
<sup>2</sup> Harris, Gibson William. “My Recollections of Abraham Lincoln.” *Woman’s Home Companion*, November 1903, pp. 9-11; see also page 106-107 of this report  
<sup>3</sup> Rindlaub, Martin P. “Lincoln as I Saw Him.” *Kiwanis Magazine*, May 1926. Accessed 5 December 2024, <https://grantcountyhistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Rindlaub.pdf> ; see also page 108-109 of this report



# OUTDATED COLLAR SHAPE

The examination of Abraham Lincoln's earliest portraits has revealed a significant detail that could potentially link the subject daguerreotype to Lincoln himself. This discovery focuses on the appearance of the over-coat, particularly its collar shape.

- The subject daguerreotype shows an outdated over-coat collar shape
- This collar bears a striking resemblance to the one in Lincoln's first recorded portrait (O-1)
- The 1846 first recorded portrait was taken after Lincoln's election to Congress, at age 37

Gibson Harris, a law student who worked in Lincoln's office from 1845 to 1847, provided valuable information <sup>1</sup> :

- Harris was a friend and roommate of Nicholas H. Shepherd, the daguerreotypist
- He recognized the 1846 daguerreotype as Shepherd's work
- Harris noted that Lincoln sat for this portrait on one or more occasions (with Mrs Lincoln)
- This marked Lincoln's first encounter with the daguerreotype process

The similarities between the subject daguerreotype and Lincoln's known appearance are noteworthy:

- The character in the subject daguerreotype strongly resembles Abraham Lincoln
- The over-coat appears to be similar to one Lincoln purchased fifteen years earlier

This discovery adds an intriguing layer to the investigation, suggesting a possible connection between the subject daguerreotype and Abraham Lincoln.

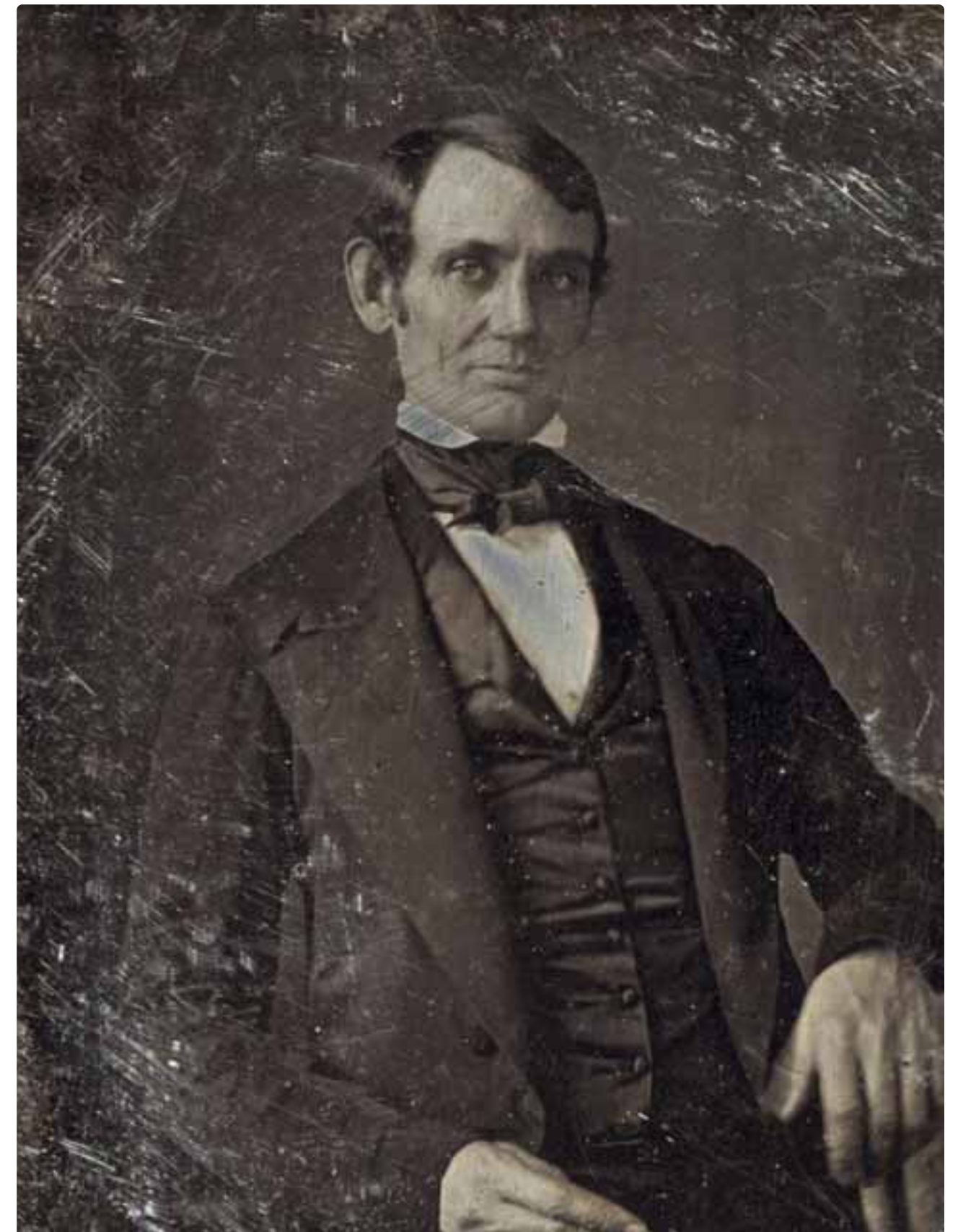


• Subject daguerreotype, collar shape of the over-coat



• We compare with Lincoln 1846 over-coat collar shape ( O-1)

<sup>1</sup>Harris, Gibson William. "My Recollections of Abraham Lincoln." see also page 106-107 of this report  
*Woman's Home Companion*, November 1903, pp. 9-11;



• O-1 (Shepherd, 1846) Laterally digitally reversed, detail



# VISIBLE SHADOWS

**Subject Daguerreotype Analysis:** We can observe the presence of soft but visible shadows in three distinct areas. Under the stovepipe hat, under the nose, under the beard.

These shadows are somewhat unusual in studio settings, where multiple light sources are typically used to control lighting conditions. The primary purpose of a photographic studio is to exert control over lighting. Collectors and specialists often scrutinize shadows in daguerreian portraits as they can offer clues about the location and time of the session.

The presence of shadows suggests the use of a singular light source, likely a strong front light. This light source could be natural sunlight or sunlight reflected in a mirror. The softness of these shadows can be attributed to the subject's bushy beard and the somewhat worn condition of the hat, which may have caused some light diffusion.

Portraits taken in snowy outdoor environments often exhibit similar shadow characteristics.

When sunlight is the source of the shadows, the angle of the light can provide valuable insights into the time of day and we should be able to estimate the incident angle of the light by closely examining the observed shadows.

**Clyde Situation:** We know the latitude and longitude of Clyde, the date of the photograph, and the exact minute (8.48 AM). This information is necessary and sufficient to allow us to calculate azimuth and elevation.

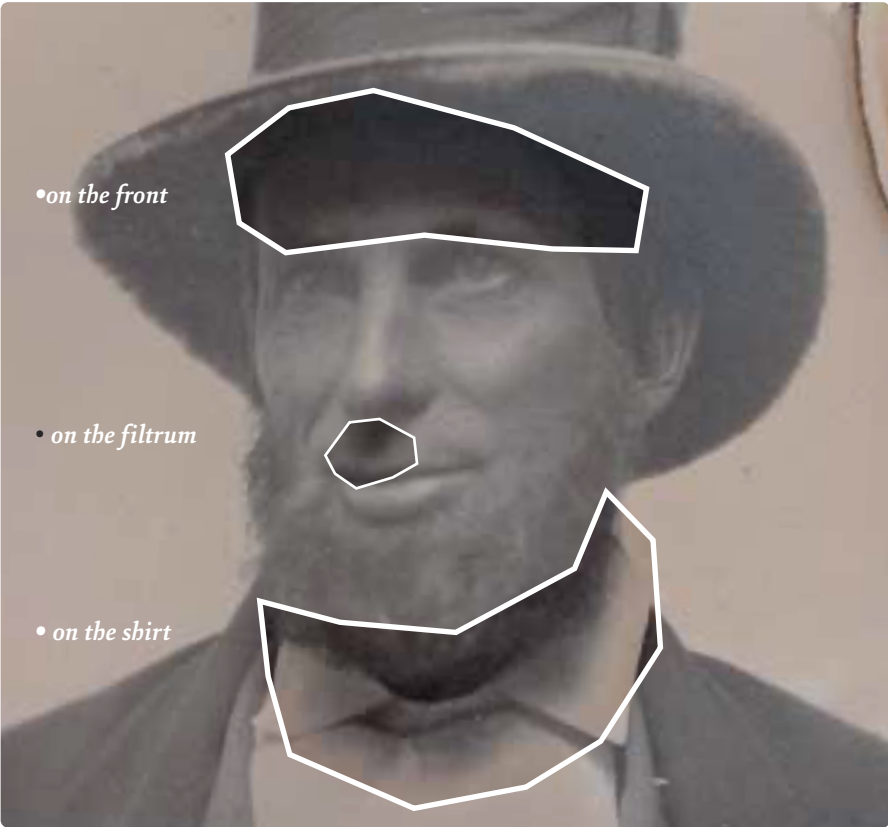
The Solar Chart (reproduced on pp. 132-133) shows an incidence angle of the Sun at 20°. We can conduct an experiment with a real person, a top hat, and an electric torch inclined at the same angle to verify the shadows.

We know

- The disposition of the railways still in existence through Clyde <sup>1</sup>
- The position of the presidential train as precisely told by Joseph Pain <sup>2</sup>
- The position of the camera on Monday morning, on a woodpile along the train as told by the *New York Times*. <sup>3</sup>

We can discuss the possibility of the model being either on the platform or on the steps going down the platform. The journalists insisted he did not leave the train.

**Conclusion:** We could double-check if these shadows are compatible with the calculations based on the known time and location.



• Subject daguerreotype, soft and visible shadows in three distinct areas



<sup>1</sup> Village Map of Clyde from 1874 Wayne County Atlas - D. G. Beers, pp. 124-125

<sup>3</sup> The *New York Times*, February 19, 1861. "Mr. Lincoln's Journey."

<sup>2</sup> Pain, Joseph. "Clyde Weekly Times," 16 February 1861, idem, 23 February 1861



# EMPTY LOOKING BACKGROUND

**Subject Daguerreotype Background Analysis:** We observe:

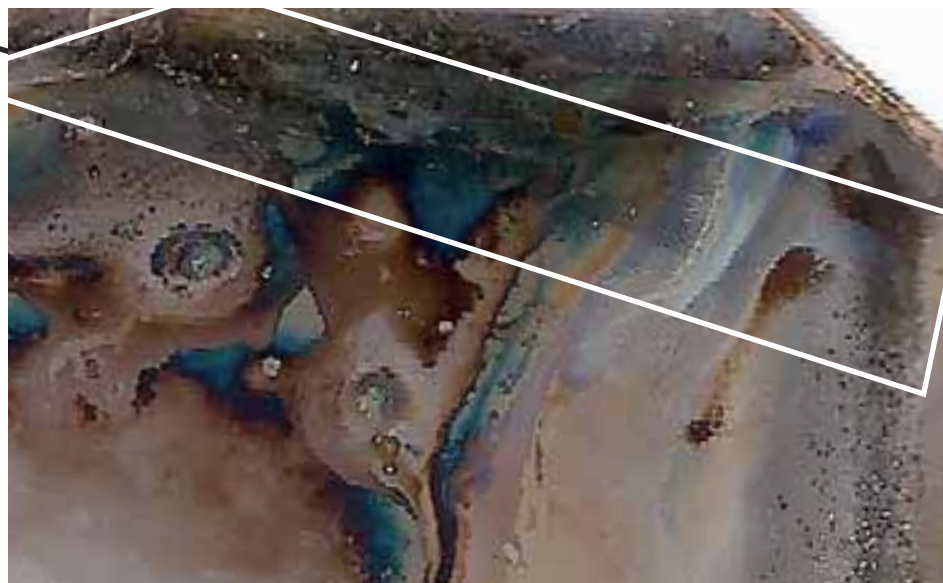
- The background is notably empty with local soft solarizations. It cannot be a grey wall or cloth, suggesting it could be the natural winter sky.
- A darker triangle in the upper right angle with a diagonal line that is unlikely to be a natural tarnish pattern. The diagonal line could indicate the edge of a metallic roof on the platform, aligning with historical accounts of the Clyde stop.

**Clyde Situation:**

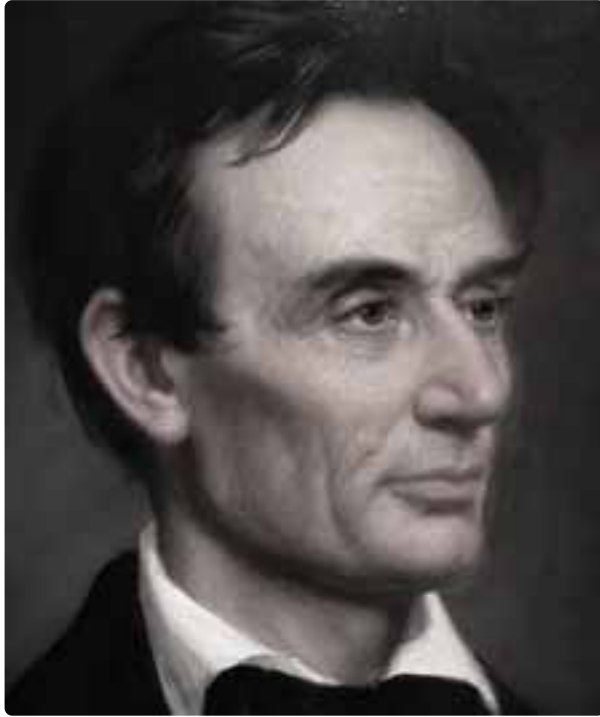
- The train stopped near Clyde depot. The map (pp. 124-125) shows the presidential railcar platform was in a very clear space without buildings
- 30,000 persons could gather to see the President-Elect, standing on the thick ice of the frozen Clyde river (rather large here) and the Erie Canal on the other side of the railways

A recent visit to modern-day Clyde confirms the absence of trees or buildings along the railways for several hundred meters near the former passenger depot.

This analysis of the background provides additional context for understanding the conditions under which the subject daguerreotype might have been taken. The empty background and the potential presence of a metallic roof edge are consistent with the known historical and geographical details of Lincoln's stop in Clyde. However, these observations alone do not definitively prove the identity of the subject or the exact location of the photograph.



• Subject daguerreotype, soft solarizations and diagonal line which could indicate the edge of a metallic roof



• 10 November 1860, portrait before growing whiskers



• Subject Daguerreotype model



• 25 November 1860, growing whiskers, O-40



• 6 April 1861, dramatic transformation, O-57

• XV •

## FACIAL FEATURES

- *Anthropometric Measurements*
  - *Untrimmed Whiskers*
  - *Moles and Scars*
  - *Eye Features*
  - *Left Ear Shape*
- *Mouth and Lips Design*
- *Discreet Hint of a Smile*
- *Dark-Brown Complexion*

SENIGALLIA

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# ANTHROPOMETRIC MEASUREMENTS

«The bones of the face are the most important structures used in identifying people, and in the case of this book, their faces in photographs. The face is a reflection of those underlying bones of the skull that determine such things as the heights of our forehead and chin, the length of our nose, the distance between our eyes, the width of our cheeks, etc.»<sup>1</sup>

**Subject Daguerreotype Analysis:** The portrait is seen from a low angle, approximately 8°

Among all known Abraham Lincoln portraits, there are no comparable examples. This angle is atypical for studio practice and suggests an outdoor improvisation.

**Comparison with Known Portraits:** We selected validated Abraham Lincoln portraits with a somewhat similar facial approach, specifically O-40 and O-118.

**Facial Recognition Technology:** The portrait was analyzed using the latest artificial intelligence face recognition software to recalculate matching anthropometric measurements. The analysis returned positive matching results from our tests.

To ensure transparency and encourage independent verification of our findings, we invite researchers and interested parties to replicate our analysis using publicly available facial recognition applications. This approach aligns with the scientific method's principles of reproducibility and peer review.

## Methodology for Replication:

1. Utilize a high-resolution digital copy of the subject daguerreotype.
2. Select reputable facial recognition software or online platforms.
3. Compare with verified portraits of Abraham Lincoln, particularly O-40 and O-118.
4. Report the results, noting any discrepancies or confirmations with our findings.

In 1860, the British journalist Edward Dicey reported “a head, coconut shaped and somewhat too small for such a stature, covered with a rough, uncombed and uncombable lank dark hair, that stands out in every direction at once; a face furrowed, wrinkled, and indented, as though it had been scarred by vitriol... and, sunk beneath bushy eyebrows, two bright, somewhat dreamy eyes, that seemed to gaze through you without looking at you; a few irregular blotches of black bristly hair in the place where beard and whiskers ought to grow; a close-set, thin-lipped, stern mouth, with two rows of white teeth; and a nose and ears, which have been taken by mistake from a head of twice the size.”<sup>2</sup>



• O-40 (November 1860)

• O-118 (February 1865)



We compare inner and outer eye corners (magenta vertical lines).

<sup>1</sup> John Sotos, *The Physical Lincoln Sourcebook*, Mt. Vernon Book Systems, 2008

<sup>2</sup> Dicey, Edward, quoted in O'Toole, Fintan. "Abraham Lincoln: The Ugly Truth." *The Irish Times*, 14 February 2009

# UNTRIMMED WHISKERS

**Subject Daguerreotype Analysis:** The character we’re trying to identify is growing an untrimmed beard.

**Abraham Lincoln’s Beard Growth:** The President-Elect let his whiskers grow for three months, until his arrival in NYC on the evening of Tuesday, 19 February 1861.

Three known portraits of the President-Elect growing his beard: O-40, O-43, O-45, with their variants.

Before the 1850s, beards were not popular among respectable middle-class men in America.

The visit of Hungarian patriot in exile Lajos Kossuth in 1851-1852 influenced the perception of beards. Lincoln dedicated a public event to Kossuth’s visit in the United States.

The story of 11 years old Grace Bedell is well known. Just before November 1860, she wrote to Lincoln suggesting he grow a beard. Lincoln answered and later met Grace Bedell in February 1861 during his train journey to Washington.

He acknowledged her influence on his decision but noted he was *“acting partly upon her suggestion.”*

As Louise L. Stevenson notes in *“Lincoln in the Atlantic world”*: *«Given the impact of Kossuth on Lincoln's rhetoric, choice of clothing, and references to Russia, Kossuth probably played a role in Lincoln's qualification of Grace's influence. In the transatlantic world, facial hair on the chin had suggested eccentricity and won little acceptance in respectable circles... Eight years after the Kossuth visit... Lincoln not only would look more handsome, he also would look more republican — to an audience of liberals in the United States and beyond...»*.

**Lincoln’s Decision.** As Harold Holzer notes in *“Lincoln President-Elect”*<sup>2</sup>:

*“Lincoln apparently decided he was not attractive enough. And for once in his life, he did something about it. For the first time, he began cultivating a beard.”*

One day of mid November 1860, as his barber William Florville (William de Fleurville, 1807-1868) prepared to give him his customary shave, Lincoln stopped him. *“Billy,”* he reportedly said, *“let's give them a chance to grow!”* The result transformed Lincoln.

*“Old Abe looks as though the campaign had worn lightly upon him. He is commencing to raise a beautiful pair of whiskers, and looks younger than usual. Still there is no disguising the fact that he is homely”* (*Lexington Globe*, 22 November 1860)<sup>3</sup>



• Subject daguerreotype model, untrimmed whiskers



• Southworth & Hawes, Kossuth, 1852



• Lincoln, 20 November 1860, O-40



• Lincoln, 9 February 1861, O-45

<sup>1</sup> Stevenson, Louise L. *“Lincoln in the Atlantic World.” the Great Secession Winter 1860-1861* Simon and Schuster, Cambridge University Press, 2015 2008, p. 84

<sup>2</sup>Holzer, Harold. *“Lincoln President-Elect: Abraham Lincoln and* <sup>3</sup>The *Lexington Globe*, 22 November 1860



# MOLES AND SCARS

### Abraham Lincoln's Known Facial Features:

- An often visible mole on the right cheek
- A visible scar under his left lip
- A scar under his lip and another one under his right eye, acquired in early childhood

### Subject Daguerreotype Analysis:

- Mole Examination: We enlarged and lightened the area of the character's cheek, revealing a darker area that could correspond to a mole on the crease. We compared this with Abraham Lincoln portraits O-26 and O-55.
- Scar Examination: We enlarged the relevant areas and compared both of them with Abraham Lincoln portrait O-5.

At age ten, Lincoln sustained a major head trauma from a horse kick, resulting in loss of consciousness. The incident occurred at Gordon's gristmill near Little Pigeon Creek, Indiana, in 1818. *"...When he arrived one day in 1818 there were others waiting in front of him. Watching the horses slowly go round and round, young Lincoln commented that "his dog could eat the meal as fast as the mill could grind it." Eventually it was Abraham's turn, and he hitched his old mare to the gristmill's arm. To keep the horse moving, he hit it with a whiplash, clucked in the normal manner, and shouted, "Git up, you old hussy; git up, you old hussy." Just as he yelled the words "Git up" again, the horse kicked backwards with a hind foot hitting the boy in the head. Lincoln was knocked down and out. Noah Gordon ran to his aid and picked up the bleeding, unconscious lad. Dave Turnham, who had come to the mill with Abraham, ran to get Abraham's father. Thomas Lincoln hauled his injured son home in a wagon and put him to bed. He lay unconscious all night... Apparently some (including Noah Gordon) thought he was dead or near death. Neighbors flocked to the Lincolns' cabin. The next morning one onlooker cried, "He's coming straight back from the dead!" Abraham jerked all over. Suddenly he blurted out the words "You old hussy," thus finishing what he was about to say before the horse knocked him out. In discussing the affair, Lincoln himself used the words "apparently killed for a time."*<sup>1</sup>

As a result of this injury, Lincoln suffered from:

- Diplopia (double vision)
- Outward deviation of the left eye due to partial paralysis of small eye muscles

<sup>1</sup> Warren, Louis A. *"Lincoln's Youth: Indiana Years, Seven to Twenty-one, 1816-1830."* Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1959



• Mole on O-26 (1860)



• Subject daguerreotype model



• Mole on O-55 (1861)



• We search a scar under his right eye



• • We observe scars O-5 (1858)



• We search a scar under his left lip

# EYE FEATURES

In 1859, Abraham Lincoln provided a brief autobiographical sketch, including a self-description, for a potential campaign biography. This description offers valuable insight into his physical appearance as perceived by himself:

**Lincoln’s self-description (1859):** *“If any personal description of me is thought desirable, it may be said, I am, in height, six feet, four inches, nearly; lean in flesh, weighing, on an average, one hundred and eighty pounds; dark complexion, with course black hair, and grey eyes - no other marks or brands recollected.”*<sup>1</sup>

## Subject Daguerreotype Analysis

- **Color:** Green, blue or grey.
- **Eye Orbit Height:** Measured from the highest point of the eyelid fold to the lowest point of the inside edge of the lower eyelid.
- **Eye Corner Measurements:** Inner and outer eye corners measured.
- **Right Eye Observation:** The right eye does not open as much as the left; the white part under the pupil is hardly visible.
- **Eyelid Drooping:** Noted, making the width of the eye more prominent.

## Abraham Lincoln’s Known Eye Features

- **Color:** Grey, as described by Lincoln himself in an 1859 autobiographical sketch.
- **Right Eye Condition:** *“The sporadic drifting of his right eye, noted by Lincoln’s contemporaries, was most likely caused by strabismus, a possible result of facial microsomia.”*<sup>2</sup>

We compare the shape and sizes of the subject’s eyes with Abraham Lincoln portraits O-4, O-5, and O-77.



• Subject daguerreotype      • Lincoln’s right eye (O-77)      • Lincoln’s left eye (1863)      • Subject daguerreotype



• O-5 (1858)



• O-4 (1858)

<sup>1</sup> Basler, Roy P., ed. *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*. Volume 3. Rutgers University Press, 1953. p. 511  
<sup>2</sup> Sotos, John G. *“The Physical Lincoln: Finding the Genetic Cause of Abraham Lincoln’s Height, Homeliness, Pseudo-Depression, and Imminent Cancer Death.”* Mt. Vernon Book Systems, 2008



# LEFT EAR SHAPE

Ears are a crucial feature in the identification process, as they are unique to each individual and remain relatively unchanged throughout adulthood. In forensic science and biometric identification, ear shape and structure are considered highly reliable markers. In the subject daguerreotype, we can see only the left ear, which provides an important point of comparison with known images of Abraham Lincoln.

## Subject Daguerreotype Analysis

- The candidate's left ear is visible, but the earlobe is hardly seen behind the sideburns.
- Due to this partial visibility, one cannot determine if the earlobe is free or attached.

## Abraham Lincoln's Ear Features

In 1860, British journalist Edward Dicey reported that Lincoln had “a nose and ears, which have been taken by mistake from a head of twice the size.”<sup>1</sup>

## Comparative Analysis

We compare the subject's left ear with Lincoln Portraits O-5, O-40, O-77 and O-85.

- We find the left ear very similar to these known Lincoln images.
- We note a remarkably similar lateral corner of the eyebrow and its positioning relative to the ear in comparison to known Lincoln images.



• O-5



• O-77



• Subject daguerreotype



• O-40



• O-84

<sup>1</sup> Dicey, Edward, quoted in O'Toole, Fintan. “Abraham Lincoln: The Ugly Truth.” *The Irish Times*, 14 February 2009

# MOUTH AND LIPS DESIGN

To analyze the subject’s mouth and lip characteristics, we conduct a detailed comparison with four well-documented photographic portraits of Abraham Lincoln from 1860, 1861, and 1865 (O-18, O-26, O-55, O-118), where the lips are clearly visible and precisely detailed.

## Abraham Lincoln’s Lips Features

- **Lip lumps (masses)** are visible in the lips and in the skin near the lips as described by John Sotos in “*Physical Lincoln*”, “*Lips in three dimensions*” <sup>1</sup>:
  - Top: Two masses are subtly visible, both in front view and in side view
  - Bottom. Two large masses occupy Lincoln’s right lower lip almost completely, and there is a suggestion of a mass on the lower left lip, just off the midline.
- **Philtrum**: The distance between the upper lip and the nose
- **Stomion**: The lip fissure midpoint round space under the philtrum, in the middle of the fissure (the line along which the lips meet)

We choose Abraham Lincoln Portraits O-18, O-26, O-55, O-118 to compare with the subject daguerreotype.

## Subject Daguerreotype Observations

The lips zone is slightly blurry. We can propose compatibility rather than exact matching

We observe similarities with lumps, philtrum, stomion but invite readers to make their own observations

<sup>1</sup> Sotos, John G. “*The Physical Lincoln: Finding the Genetic Cause of Abraham Lincoln’s Height, Homeliness, Pseudo-Depression, and Imminent Cancer Death.*” Mt. Vernon Book Systems, 2008, p. 128



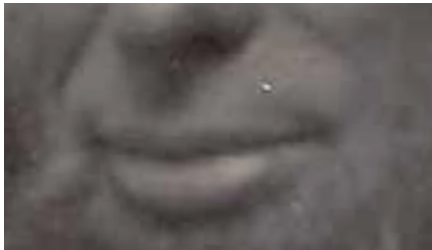
• O-26 (1860)



• O-55 (1861)



*Philtrum*



• Subject daguerreotype



*Stomion*



• O-18 (1860)



• O-118 (1865)



# DISCREET HINT OF A SMILE

**Subject Daguerreotype Observations:** We guess the hint of a Smile.

**Abraham Lincoln Public Persona:** While modern audiences might perceive Abraham Lincoln as rarely smiling in portraits, contemporary accounts paint a different picture:

*“His large bony face when in repose was unspeakably sad and as unreadable as that of a sphinx, his eyes were as expressionless as those of a dead fish; but when he smiled or laughed at one of his own stories or that of another then everything about him changed; his figure became alert, a lightning change came over his countenance, his eyes scintillated and I thought he had the most expressive features I had ever seen on the face of a man.”*<sup>1</sup> (Dr. James Miner)

Lincoln’s private secretary John Nicolay observed: *“The question of looks depended in Lincoln’s case very much upon his moods... The large framework of his features was greatly modified by the emotions which controlled them.”*

George Peter Alexander Healy’s 1860 portrait, the last to show Lincoln without a beard, captured a unique moment. As Duncan Phillips noted: *“This is a happy Lincoln with a glint of the famous humor which was to mitigate his sorrows and his cares... It is a disarmingly personal impression of the eyes of true greatness at a moment when they were lighted with the surprise, the honor, and the vision of supreme opportunity.”*<sup>1</sup>

A comprehensive description of Lincoln’s face reveals its complexity:

*“He spoke of himself as homely, but in many ways he was handsome. There was an uncommon virility in his looks. Early photographs show a face toughened by frontier life, hard as a hickory knot. Its sheer, rugged power is appealing; but taken one by one, the features are unattractive.*

*... Yet this face is an anomaly. Under the heavy eyelids is an alert glint with just a touch of humor. His eyes are at the same time cold and warm, penetrating and dreamy. The pursed thick lips, clenched with determination, seem always on the verge of a smile.*

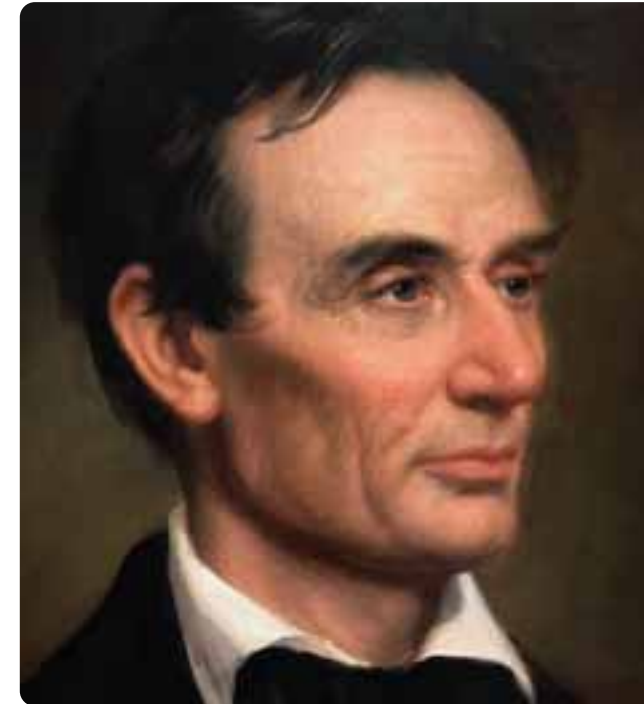
*During the war years, successive photographs reveal not just the aging of his face but the growth of a spiritual power which supplants ambition. Toward the end, his features, weary and ready for sleep, show a sort of peace even when the sadness lies in dark pools under his eyes...It is a wonderful face—a good face to look at and to study, for it has just enough mystery so that you can almost, but not quite, touch the man behind it!”*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Charles Hamilton and Lloyd Ostendorf, *Lincoln in Photographs, An Album of Every Known Pose*, 1963

<sup>2</sup> Dicey, Edward, quoted in O’Toole, Fintan. “Abraham Lincoln: The Ugly Truth.” *The Irish Times*, 14 February 2009

<sup>3</sup> *Erie Weekly Gazette*, 21 February 1861, in J. H. Cramer, “A President-elect in Western Pennsylvania,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 71 (1947): 216-17

<sup>4</sup> Article published by the *New York Times*, 21 February 1861, reproduced page 269



• Healy portrait, oil on canvas, November 1861



• Subject daguerreotype

A local journalist’s account during Lincoln’s journey as president-elect provides further insight:

*“A local journalist detected in the president-elect’s eyes ‘a blending of gravity and goodness’ which ‘wins confidence and affection, and satisfies one of his fitness for the great office.’ His smile conveyed ‘much evident sincerity’ and his bow ‘real courtesy.’”*<sup>3</sup>

A few days later, Joseph Howard Jr added : «Mr. Lincoln, who, during the Mayor’s speech, had preserved his characteristically thoughtful look, with that sort of dreamy expression of the eye, as if his thoughts were busily engaged, stepped back a few paces, drew up his tall form to its fullest height, brightened his face with a pleasant smile, and spoke as follows...»<sup>4</sup>

The subject daguerreotype not only aligns with literary descriptions of Abraham Lincoln’s homely aspect but also reconciles his serious photographic portraits with accounts of his debonair and happy soul.



• O-118

# DARK-BROWN COMPLEXION

## Subject Daguerreotype Observations

We observe an impressive dark-brown complexion.

## Abraham Lincoln Portraits

We will compare with outdoor portraits, O-62 and O-66.

We mention three contemporary reports

**Walt Whitman’s account** (Hudson River Railroad Company, NYC, 19 February 1861): *“I shall not easily forget the first time I ever saw Abraham Lincoln...”*

*“From the top of an omnibus (driven up on side, close by, and blocked by the curbstone and the crowds) I had, I say, a capital view of it all and especially of Mr. Lincoln: his looks and gait; his perfect composure and coolness; his unusual and uncouth height; his dress of complete black, stovepipe hat pushed back on his head; dark-brown complexion; seamed and wrinkled yet canny-looking face; black, bush head of hair; disproportionately long neck; and his hands held behind, as he stood observing the people.”*<sup>1</sup>

**William H. Herndon** described Lincoln as having *“very dark skin”* and a *“sallow”* complexion.<sup>2</sup>

**Abraham Lincoln’s self-description** (in a brief biographical sketch, 1859): *“If any personal description of me is thought desirable, it may be said, I am, in height, six feet, four inches, nearly; lean in flesh, weighing, on an average, one hundred and eighty pounds; dark complexion, with course black hair, and grey eyes - no other marks or brands recollected.”*

Those three reports and the Antietam portraits could indicate that Abraham Lincoln had a dark complexion, which he shared with many westerners and men from the frontier. The natural light in outdoor situations could reinforce this appearance in photographic portraits.

It’s worth noting that Lincoln’s complexion was often described as varying depending on his health, stress levels, and exposure to the elements, which may account for some of the differences in descriptions and photographic representations throughout his life.



• Subject daguerreotype



• Lincoln outdoor portrait O-66



• Lincoln outdoor portrait O-62

<sup>1</sup> Whitman, Walt. *Complete Prose Works*. Philadelphia: David McKay, 1892, pp. 461-462

<sup>2</sup> Herndon, William H. and Jesse W. Weik. *Herndon’s Lincoln: The True Story of a Great Life*. Chicago: Belford, Clarke & Company, 1889

<sup>3</sup> Basler, Roy P., ed. *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*. Volume 3. Rutgers University Press, 1953. p. 511





• XVI •

# MINUTE-BY-MINUTE RECONSTRUCTION

*A Detailed Scene Narration*

*This investigation draws upon several historical sources, including the preserved special train Time-Table and accounts from train passengers and village witnesses.*

*Based on these sources, we propose a possible minute-by-minute reconstruction of events, while acknowledging that some details remain speculative.*

SENIGALLIA  
• MMXXV •



## 8.44 AM

A piercing sound reverberates through the frozen landscape of the Clyde, New York Central Railroad station. The station, situated between the Erie Canal and the river, is draped in a thick layer of snow on this chilly February morning<sup>1-3</sup>. The air is brisk, and the sun casts a picturesque scene, with the only sounds being the joyful shouts of children engaged in snowball fights and the shrill whistle of the approaching train<sup>4</sup>.

As the train comes to a halt, the platform and depot teem with people, all eagerly anticipating a glimpse of the president-elect, Abraham Lincoln<sup>2</sup>.

The village of Clyde, located in Wayne County, boasts a population of 3,000<sup>1</sup>, and its residents have gathered to greet him. Those who arrived earliest at the train depot now stand closely packed on the tracks behind the presidential car. Others have ventured out onto the frozen surface of the canal that runs alongside the tracks. Despite the bone-chilling temperature of -12° Celsius (10 °F)<sup>1,3</sup>, there's no immediate danger. They heard the train approaching from the west, departing from Rochester with a new engine at 7.40 AM and arriving in Clyde at 8.44 AM as announced in the newspaper<sup>2,4,5</sup>.

Despite the cold, many have turned out to see him. The town leans predominantly Republican<sup>4</sup>, and it's evident that Lincoln enjoys strong support here.

The schools even permitted students to be absent so that their families could witness what the president-elect, a man of humble origins, looked like<sup>4</sup>. While newspapers have previously reported on his distinctive physical appearance and his preference for ordinary clothing, for many, this is their first in-person encounter. It's likely to be their last as well, considering that, in 1861, traveling thousands of miles across America isn't easy, except for one-way journeys driven by necessity in pursuit of employment or opportunities.

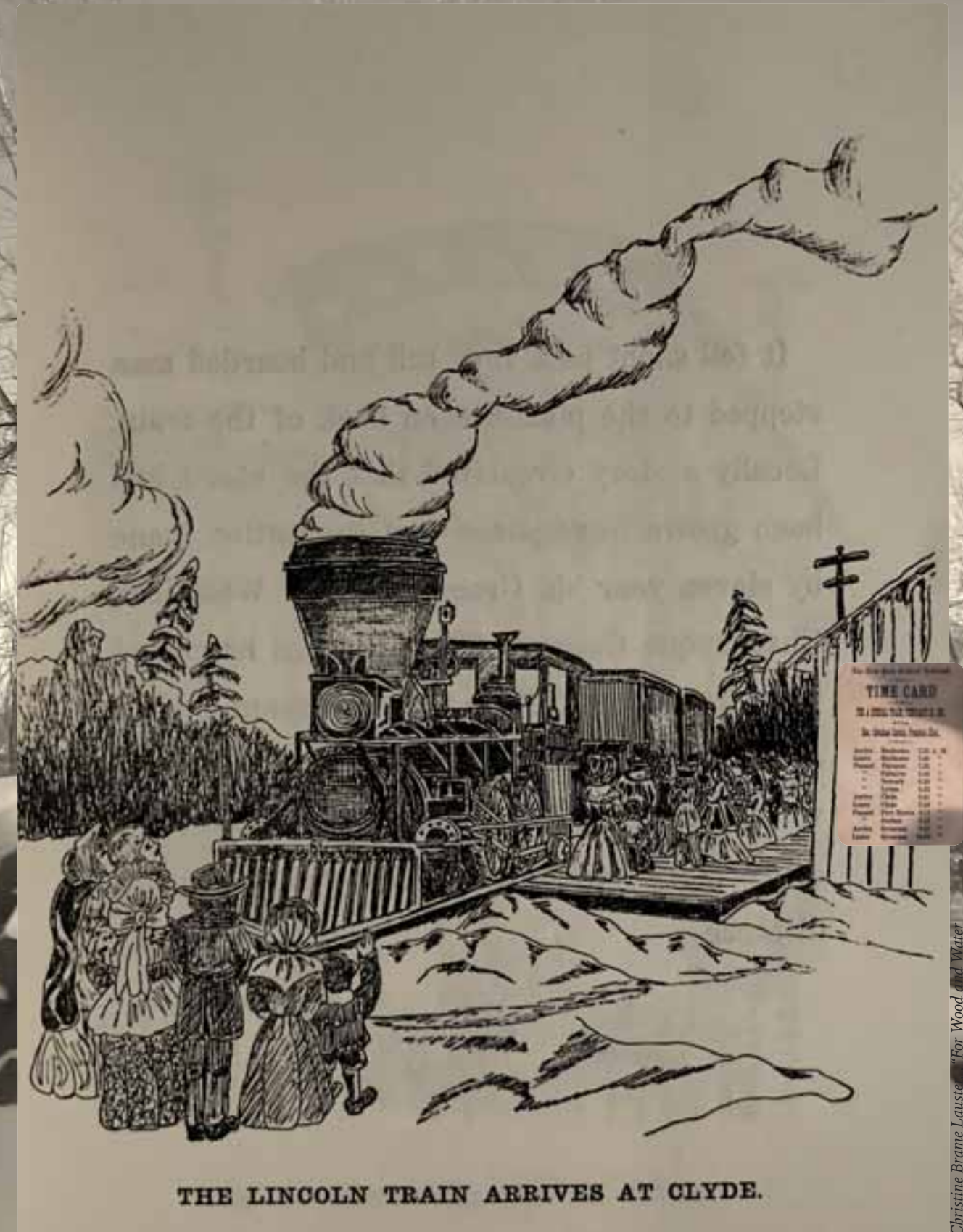
<sup>1</sup> Morrison, Wayne E. "Morrison's History of Clyde, Wayne Co., New York." 5th edition, 1980

<sup>2</sup> Pain, Joseph A., *The Clyde Weekly Times*, 23 February 1861

<sup>3</sup> Van Deusen, John P. Personal diary entry, 18 February 1861. Quoted by Wayne Morrison

<sup>4</sup> Fagant, John. *"The Best of the Bargain: Lincoln's Journey to Washington."* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2010

<sup>5</sup> *New York Central Railroad Special Timetable, The Clyde Weekly Times*, 16 February 1861





## 8.45 AM

At 8.45 AM, “*Six feet four of humanity*”<sup>1</sup> emerged from the car, and upon stepping onto the platform, an enthusiastic cheer greeted Hon. Abraham Lincoln, the President-elect of the United States. William Wood introduced the President-elect to the approximately three thousand people in attendance<sup>1-3</sup>. Typically, a local politician or townsman would have had the honor of addressing Lincoln on behalf of the community. However, in this instance, no one was available for a formal speech, so Lincoln spoke only briefly.

He addressed the gathering with these words: “*Ladies and gentlemen, I simply appear before you to say good morning and farewell. I did not come here to make a speech; nor do I have the time to do so even if I intended to. I now bid you good morning, and when the train departs, I will come out again to bid you farewell.*”<sup>1-3</sup>

Did Abraham Lincoln crack a few of his well-known jokes<sup>4,5</sup> before swiftly retreating inside to rest? He's been traveling for ten days, and the long journey has been exhausting.<sup>1,4</sup>

Lincoln retreated back into the train car, to the despair of a young man busy on the top of a wood-pile.

Despite the frigid weather, the village local photographer John B. Roberts<sup>3</sup> has prepared his Daguerreian plate and set up his tripod on this wood-pile<sup>4</sup>, facing the side of the presidential railcar. However, he encounters difficulties because, at -12° Celsius (10°F), metal components adhere to his fingers, and mittens are ill-suited to the precision required of a photographer in 1861.

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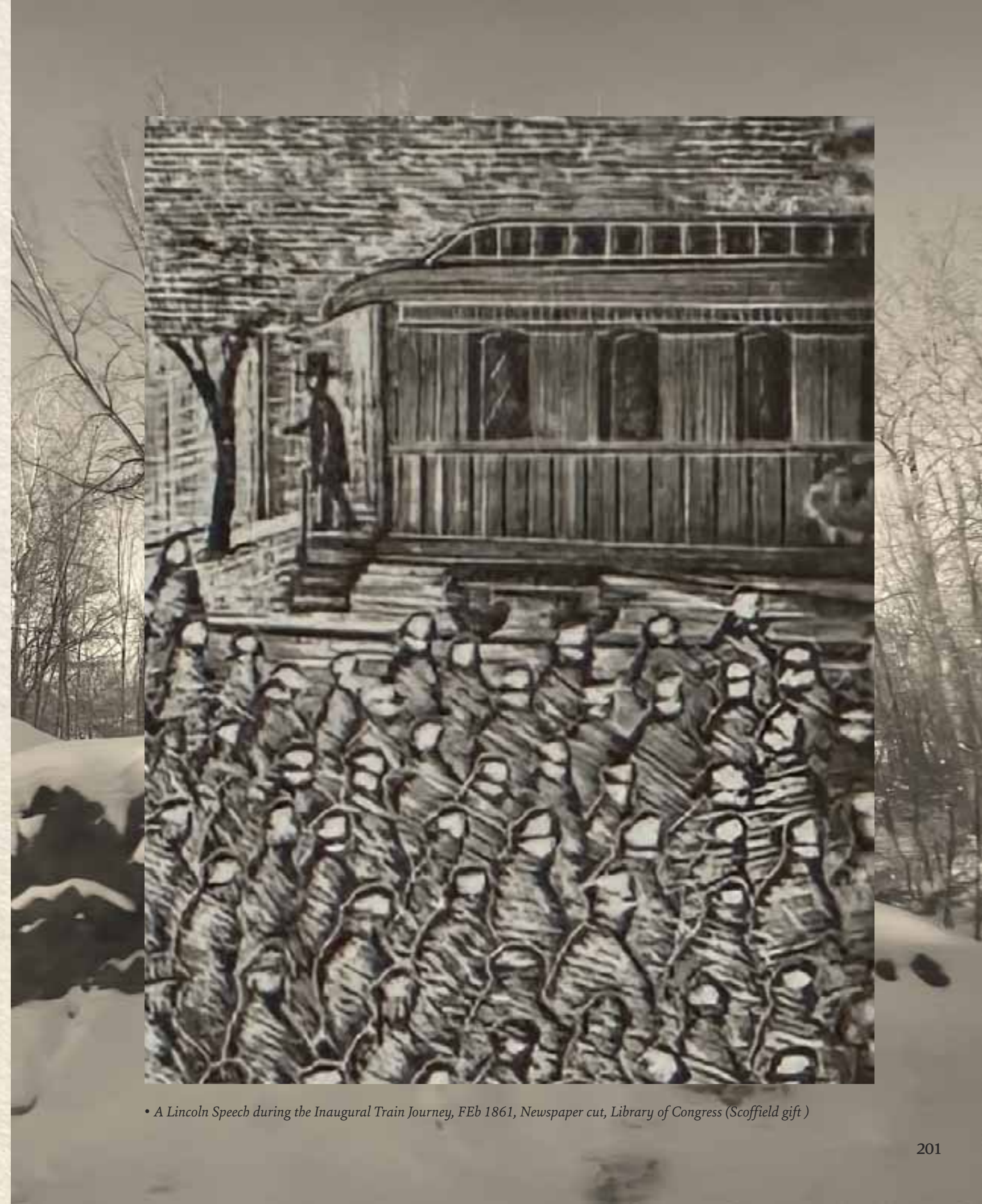
<sup>1</sup> Fagant, John. “*The Best of the Bargain: Lincoln’s Journey to Washington.*” Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2010

<sup>2</sup> *The Clyde Weekly Times*, 23 February 1861

<sup>3</sup> Morrison, Wayne E. “*Morrison’s History of Clyde, Wayne Co., New York.*” 5th edition, 1980

<sup>4</sup> Howard, Joseph Jr. “*The Journey of the President Elect.*” *The New York Times*, 19 February 1861

<sup>5</sup> Villard, Henry. “*Memoirs of Henry Villard.*” Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1904



• A Lincoln Speech during the Inaugural Train Journey, Feb 1861, Newspaper cut, Library of Congress (Scofield gift )



## 8.46 AM

The audience is quiet; the train doesn't move, and nobody seems awake. On that morning, "*the Presidential party were awakened at the early and inconvenient hour of 4.30 o'clock*" (the *New York Times*).<sup>1</sup>

A heavy silence begins to envelop the multitude. They cannot believe that nothing will happen.<sup>2,3</sup>

John likely finishes installing the plate in the frame and adjusting the optics. He had ostensibly placed a lot of hope in this operation and had purportedly committed to providing this photograph to one of his most important clients.

The precise date and time of the train's arrival have been announced in the days leading up to the event<sup>2,4</sup>. John likely started preparing his silvered copper plate around 7.30 AM, presumably polishing it and exposing it to iodine and bromine vapors at approximately 8:15 AM, half an hour before the expected arrival.

A daguerreian plate can be prepared in one hour, used in the darkroom for one hour (the maximum time before it expires), and then developed for another hour<sup>5</sup>. The day before, John may have conceived a plan, organized the sequence, and located the probable rear platform of the stationary train. He has spotted a convenient wood-pile to set up his tripod and adjust the height of the lens.<sup>1</sup>

It's possible that John was unaware that no photographer had yet achieved such a feat. That few have ever been able to capture a fleeting moment with a daguerreotype. The invention credited to Daguerre does not allow for improvisation because one must always follow the rule of the three-hour accordion: one hour of preparation, one hour of exposure, and one hour of development. Photojournalism had to wait for the collodion process.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Howard, Joseph Jr. "*The Journey of the President Elect.*" *The New York Times*, 19 February 1861

<sup>2</sup> Pain, Joseph. *The Clyde Weekly Times*, 23 February 1861

<sup>3</sup> Morrison, Wayne E. "*Morrison's History of Clyde, Wayne Co., New York.*" 5<sup>th</sup> edition, 1980

<sup>4</sup> Fagant, John. "*The Best of the Bargain: Lincoln's Journey to Washington.*" Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2010

<sup>5</sup> Newhall, Beaumont. "*The History of Photography: From 1839 to the Present.*" Museum of Modern Art, 1982





8.47 AM

When the whistle blows, announcing that the train is about to depart, a mix of frustration and excitement ripples through the crowd.

As the train prepares to leave, tension mounts. Roberts' colleague and neighbor, Joseph Pain, the local journalist, takes decisive action. He ascends the platform, climbing the three steel steps. With the workers already releasing the brakes, he addresses the train conductor, Mr. Wood, at the controls with conviction, calling for Mr Lincoln.

Mr. Wood, known for his inflated sense of importance as master of the train, platform, and door<sup>1</sup>, proves difficult to persuade. After an agonizing minute, he finally relents and returns to the car to inform Abraham Lincoln of the situation before departure<sup>2</sup>.

Mr. Lincoln, who had already been dozing, requires a few moments to gather his thoughts before emerging onto the platform<sup>3</sup>.

Joseph Pain seizes the opportunity to explain to the imposing President-Elect that he represents the village elders. These seniors, unable to attend due to the cold weather, have delegated him to shake the president's hand. Pain introduces himself as the editor of the *Clyde Times*<sup>2</sup>, a weekly newspaper.

He likely further explains that these same elders have commissioned his friend John, the photographer, to capture the presidential visage they will never see in person.

Later, Joseph Pain will recount the encounter: *"We stood by Mr. Lincoln's side ... and to give some idea of his height, our head reached about half way between his elbow and shoulder; and though not tall, we are not among the smallest race of bipeds."*

The President-Elect bids the crowd farewell and now looks at the young operator, feet in the snow, head already under a black cape. Does he understand the unusual situation created by the young daguerreotypist? Does he remember the young Shepherd, the audacious wandering photographer friend of his student clerk Gibson in Springfield, who explained to him this bright invention full of promises during a couple of sessions to realize his first daguerreian portrait and the first portrait of Mrs. Todd Lincoln<sup>4</sup>?

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<sup>1</sup> Villard, Henry. *"Memoirs of Henry Villard."* Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1904

<sup>2</sup> Pain, Joseph. The *"Clyde Weekly Times,"* 23 February 1861

<sup>3</sup> Searcher, Victor. *"Lincoln's Journey to Greatness."* Philadelphia: John C. Winston Co., 1960

<sup>4</sup> Harris, Gibson William. *"My Recollections of Abraham Lincoln."* November 1903





## 8.48 AM

John Roberts, likely ice-cold and presumably overwhelmed by emotion, stands ready, his frozen hand on the shutter. <sup>1-5</sup> Fortunately, daguerreotype plates do not freeze.

If Mr. Lincoln agrees to stay still, the photograph will only take ten seconds. Let's imagine Abraham Lincoln turning to the rising sun and gazing at the bright horizon.

The man on the train signals for silence, everyone holds their poses as the president does. The workers keep their hands in the suspended gesture of releasing the brakes.

Even as he descends down the lower step, Lincoln towers over the photographer with his six-foot height and impressive top hat. The president is much taller than the photographer had anticipated, despite having been told many times about his height. The photographer has to tilt his lens and take an improvised portrait from a slightly lower angle to capture Lincoln's towering figure. The rumor spreads to the first car. Something unexpected is happening—an adventure <sup>2-5</sup> .

Behind the locomotive, there is the baggage car and then the passenger car, which we would call second class, with 40 people, including 20 journalists sent by the New York State's main newspapers: Joseph Howard of the *New York Times*, William T. Tinsley of the *Lyons Republican*, Almon Clapp of the *Buffalo Morning Express*, Henri Villard for the *New York Herald*, and Horace Greeley for the *New York Tribune*. <sup>6</sup>

The reporters have been told not to get off the train, as it is just a technical stop to get wood and water. They can't see the scene. If they could have opened the window at -12° Celsius (10 °F), then perhaps by craning their necks, they could see the silhouette of the photographer and the tripod perched on a pile of wood. <sup>1-5</sup>

Patience, patience—in a few moments, it's Ward Lamon, Lincoln's bodyguard and close friend, who will come to tell what happened <sup>1</sup>. He is the only one, along with the conductor, the servant, and the president's children, who can walk from one car to another, and he does so, becoming the main source of information for the journalists.

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<sup>1</sup> Fagant, John. "The Best of the Bargain: Lincoln's Journey to Washington." Albany, NY, 2010

<sup>2</sup> William T. Tinsley, *Lyons Republican*, February 1861

<sup>3</sup> Pain, Joseph. "Clyde Weekly Times," 23 February 1861

<sup>4</sup> "Mr. Lincoln's Journey," *The New York Times*, 19 février 1861

<sup>5</sup> "Lincoln's Visit to Clyde," *Buffalo Morning Express*, 21 février 1861

<sup>6</sup> Holzer, Harold. "*Lincoln President-Elect*" Simon & Schuster, 2008





## 8.49 AM

The photographer has closed the shutter. He begins to fold his camera. The train whistle blows again. Everyone hurries off. Let's imagine Mr. Lincoln hasn't lost his slight smile.

Ward Lamon gives the daring photographer a printed portrait<sup>1</sup>, a lithograph similar to those distributed during the election campaign. It's a black and white lithograph of the Republican candidate without a beard. Lincoln had only started growing his beard at the end of November, shortly after the election results, thus keeping his promise to young girl Grace Bedell.

Ward Lamon guides the President-Elect back to the warmth of the comfortable car and the train begins to move<sup>2</sup>.

Only Joseph Pain, still amazed to have convinced the great man, remains still on the platform. But as the train gains speed, he jumps off the moving train and falls into the snow<sup>3,4</sup>, to the delight of the children who burst out laughing. The story will be passed down from generation to generation<sup>5</sup>, like an mnemotecnical anecdote to remeber better the great event.

The entire stop had lasted little more than five minutes, with an unexpected photographic addition to the carefully planned schedule of the President-elect.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "One of the suite sent the ambitious artist an excellent engraved likeness of the President elect." William T. Tinsley, *Lyons Republican*, February 1861

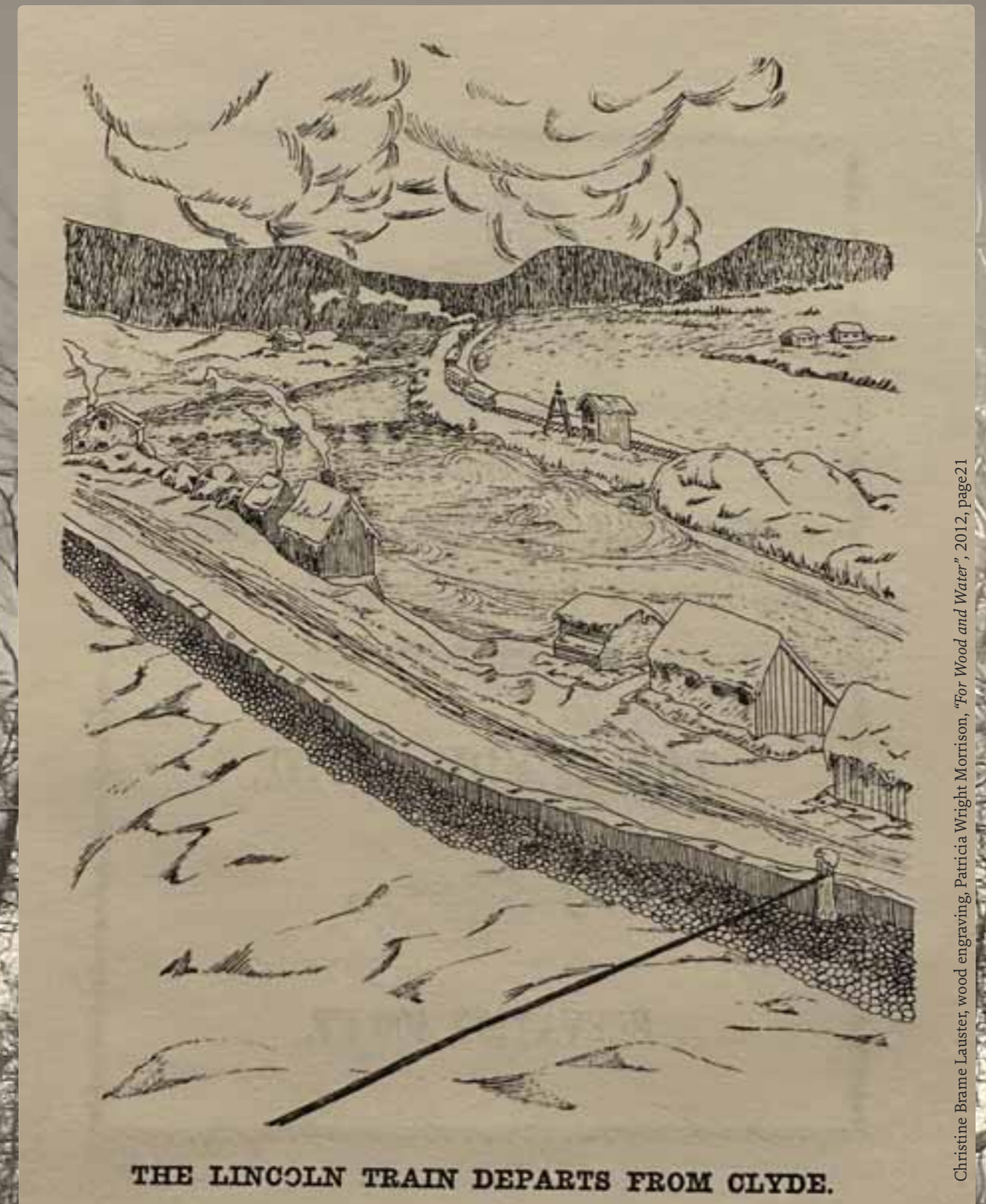
<sup>2</sup> *The Clyde Weekly Times*, 23 February 1861. Also quoted in Morrison, Wayne E. "Morrison's History of Clyde, Wayne Co., New York." 5th edition, 1980

<sup>3</sup> Howard, Joseph Jr. "The Journey of the President Elect." *The New York Times*, 19 February 1861

<sup>4</sup> Fagant, John. "The Best of the Bargain: Lincoln's Journey to Washington." Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2010

<sup>5</sup> Wright Morrison, Patricia and Brame Lauster, Christine "For Wood and Water, The Lincoln Train at Clyde", Clyde, 2012

<sup>6</sup> This reconstruction is based on various historical sources, including contemporary accounts and later studies. While we've strived for accuracy, some elements remain speculative or draw from local traditions. It represents a plausible interpretation of available evidence, acknowledging the challenges in reconstructing historical events with absolute certainty. We encourage readers to view this as a starting point for further exploration of this intriguing moment in history.



Christine Brame Lauster, wood engraving, Patricia Wright Morrison, "For Wood and Water", 2012, page 21





• *Abraham Lincoln Elected Representative*, daguerreotype, 1846 (O-1, caption page 17)

• XVII •

## TIMELINE OF SEVERAL ABRAHAM LINCOLN KEY PORTRAITS

- *Senatorial Candidate (1858)*
- *Cooper Union (February 1860)*
- *Candidate for Nominee (March-June 1860)*
- *President-Elect, oil on canvas portrait (Nov.1860)*
- *Growing Whiskers (December 1860-January 1861)*
- *Last portrait in Springfield ( 9 February 1861)*

Subject daguerreotype could be included here if confirmed

- *Arrival in Washington (24 February 1861)*
- *President (March-April 1861)*
- *Antietam Outdoor Portraits (October 1862)*
- *Gettysburg Portrait (November 1863)*
- *Mathew Brady (January 1864)*
- *Second Term (February 1865)*

SENIGALLIA

• MMXXV •



# ABRAHAM BYERS

7 May 1858

Abraham Byers (1836-1920)

Abraham Lincoln Senatorial Candidate

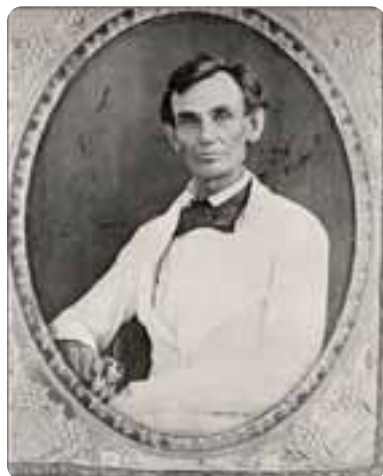
Beardstown, Illinois, 7 May 1858

Ambrotype (University of Nebraska)

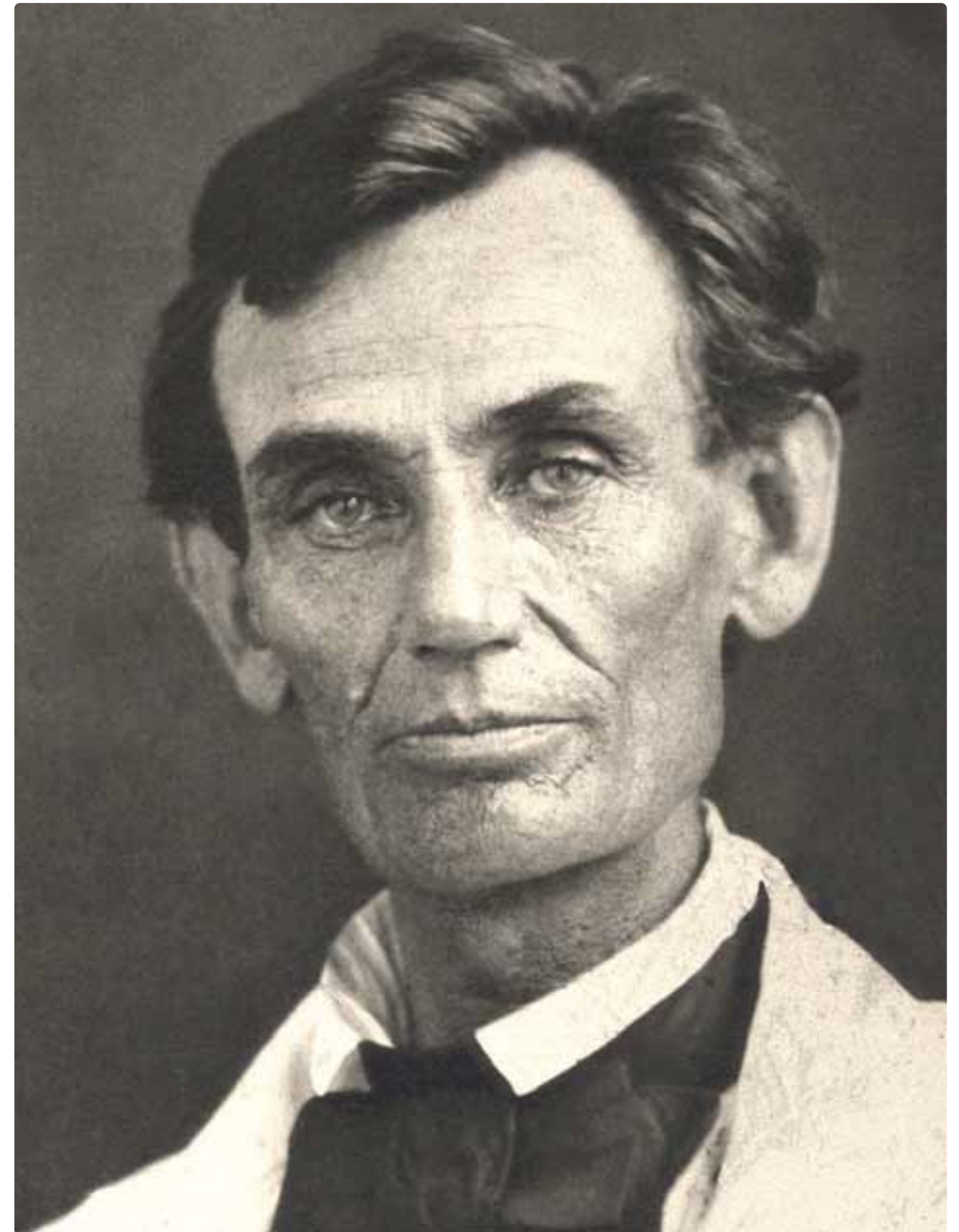
*"Here is Lincoln as he appeared in court on the day he won his most famous case. Defending Duft Armstrong against a murder-at-mid-night charge, Lincoln produced an old almanac to show that the state's witness could not have seen Armstrong kill the victim because there was no moonlight. After the acquittal, Lincoln was stopped in the street by Abraham Byers, an eighteen-year-old amateur photographer who had acquired his gallery in settlement of a debt.*

*Recalled Byers: "Lincoln was attending court and boarded at the National Hotel... after dinner he stepped out on the street ahead of me. I caught up with him, as I went to my rooms, and said to him: — 'Mr. Lincoln, I want you to go upstairs with me to my gallery; I wish to take an ambrotype of you.'— "He cast his eyes down on his old holland linen suit which had no semblance of starch in it, and said: — 'These clothes are dirty and unfit for a picture.' — But I insisted and he finally went with me."*

When Byers took his picture in his *People's Ambrotype Gallery* at 24 North Water Street in Beardstown, he used the process of ambrotyping, a collodion or wet-glass plate which, when developed and dried, could be used as a negative to produce an unlimited number of duplicate pictures on paper, or could become a positive likeness when mounted against a dark background.



• (O-5)



• (O-5) detail



# SAMUEL G. ALSCHULER

25 May 1858

Samuel G. Alschuler (1826-1882)

Abraham Lincoln wearing a Borrowed Coat

Urbana, Illinois, 25 May 1858

Albumen print of the lost ambrotype (Alfred Withal Stern Collection of Lincolniana)

Abraham Lincoln was to become the nominated senatorial candidate for the Republican party. Judge J. O. Cunningham, who was present when the picture was taken, wrote as follows of the circumstances:

*"One morning I was in the gallery of Mr. Alschuler, when Mr. Lincoln came into the room and said he had been informed that he (Alschuler) wished him to sit for a picture. Alschuler said he had sent such a message to Mr. Lincoln, but he could not take the picture in that coat (referring to a linen duster in which Mr. Lincoln was clad), and asked if he had not a dark coat in which he could sit. Mr. Lincoln said he had not; that this was the only coat he had brought with him from his home. Alschuler said he could wear his coat, and gave it to Mr. Lincoln, who pulled off the duster and put on the artist's coat. Alschuler was a very short man, with short arms, but with a body nearly as large as the body of Mr. Lincoln.*

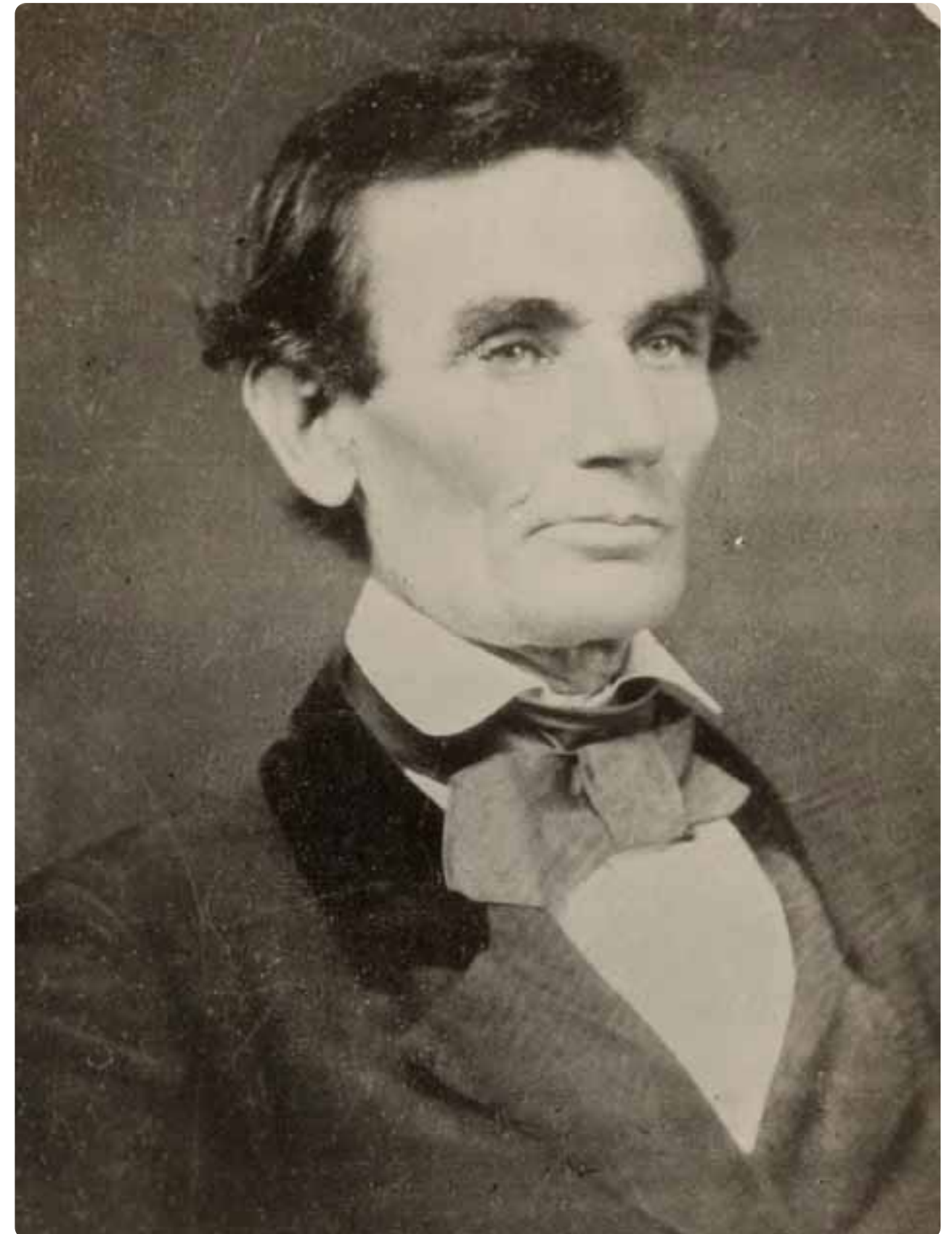
*The arms of the latter extended through the sleeves of the coat of Alschuler a quarter of a yard, making him quite ludicrous, at which he (Lincoln) laughed immoderately, and sat down for the picture to be taken with an effort at being sober enough for the occasion. The lips in the picture show this."*

Alschuler took another portrait of Lincoln two years later, which was the first to show Lincoln with a beard, O-40, reproduced page 231.

The coat-borrowing incident reveals Lincoln's unpretentious nature and willingness to laugh at himself, traits that endeared him to many voters.



• (O-4) reversed copy-print, Holzer collection



• (O-4) detail



# WILLIAM PAINTER PEARSON

26 August 1858

**William Painter Pearson** (1833-1864, *aka W.P., T.P. or Tom Pearson or Pierson*)

**Abraham Lincoln Senatorial Candidate**

**Macomb, Illinois, 26 August 1858**

Copy-albumen print of an ambrotype (printed 1866, now in Western Illinois Museum)

From a photograph loaned by W. J. Franklin of Macomb, Illinois, and taken in 1866 from an ambrotype made in 1858 in Macomb, later destroyed in a fire at the Century Magazine building in 1888. This portrait also figures in the collection in the Lincoln Home at Springfield, Illinois, with the following inscription:

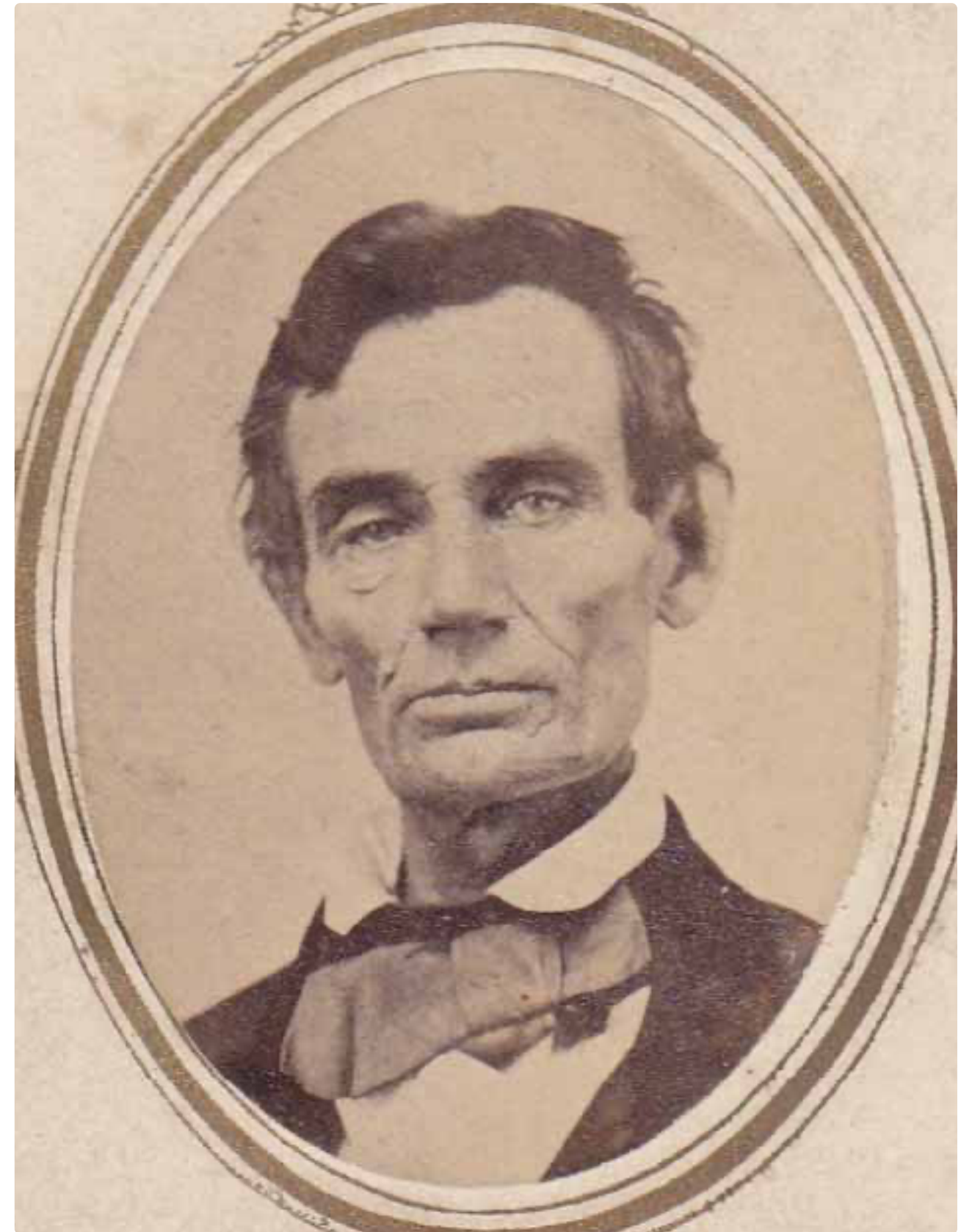
*"This likeness of Abraham Lincoln is a faithful copy of an original ambrotype, now in possession of James K. Magie. It was taken August 25, 1858, by Mr. T. P. Pierson, at Macomb, in this State, and is believed to be of anterior date to any other likeness of Mr. Lincoln ever brought before the public. Mr. Magie happened to remain over night at Macomb, at the same hotel with Mr. Lincoln, and the next morning took a walk about town, and upon Mr. Magie's invitation they stepped into Mr. Pierson's establishment, and the ambrotype of which this is a copy was the result.*

*Mr. Lincoln, upon entering, looked at the camera as though he was unfamiliar with such an instrument, and then remarked: 'Well, do you want to take a shot at me with that thing?' He was shown to a glass, where he was told to 'fix up,' but declined, saying it would not be much of a likeness if he fixed up any. The old neighbors and acquaintances of Mr. Lincoln in Illinois, upon seeing this picture, are apt to exclaim: 'There! that's the best likeness of Mr. Lincoln that I ever saw!' The dress he wore in this picture is the same in which he made his famous canvass with Senator Douglas." (J. C. Power, custodian of the Lincoln monument in Springfield, quoted in *The Early Life of Abraham Lincoln*, by Ida M. Tarbell and J. McCan Davis, 1896).*

W.J. Franklin of Macomb later made a copy of the ambrotype in 1866. This copy negative was then used to create additional reproductions.

The mention of the dress being the same as worn during the “*famous canvass with Senator Douglas*” links the image directly to a significant moment in American political history.

Some personal information about Pearson is in the Illinois Civil War Muster and Descriptive Rolls. Pearson was 29 years old when he joined up on June 18, 1862. He was five feet, eight and a half inches tall with black hair. He was married and his occupation was artist. Pearson died December 1864 in a tragic accident at the age of 31. While riding in a funeral procession, he was fatally injured by a team of runaway horses when a carriage overturned.



• (O-8) Digitally reversed from Western Illinois Museum artefact



# WILLIAM JUDKINS THOMSON

11 October 1858

William Judkins Thompson (1823-1869)

Senatorial Candidate

Monmouth, Illinois, 11 October 1858

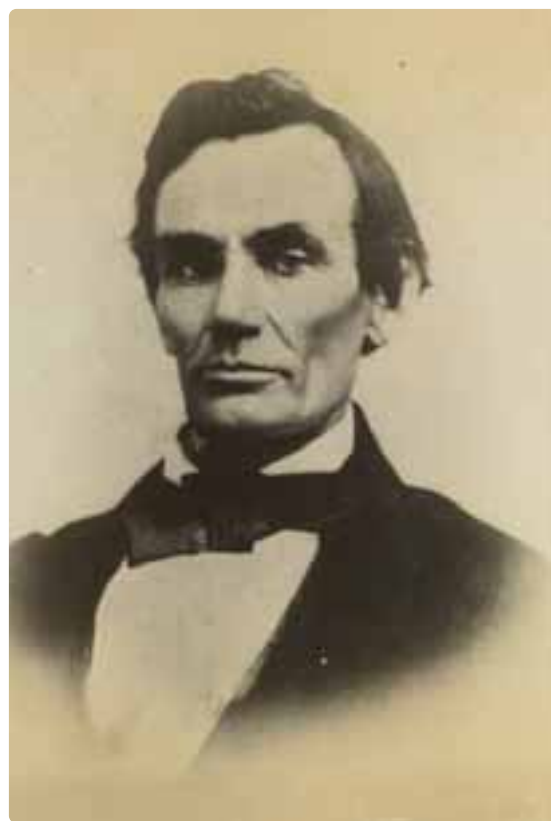
Half plate ambrotype (Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery).

The «*Great Debates of 1858*» were a series of seven debates between Abraham Lincoln, the Republican candidate for the United States Senate from Illinois, and incumbent Senator Stephen Douglas, the Democratic Party candidate. Two days before the sixth debate with Senator Stephen A. Douglas at Quincy, Illinois. Mr. Lincoln spoke for three hours at Monmouth. The portrait dates from this moment.

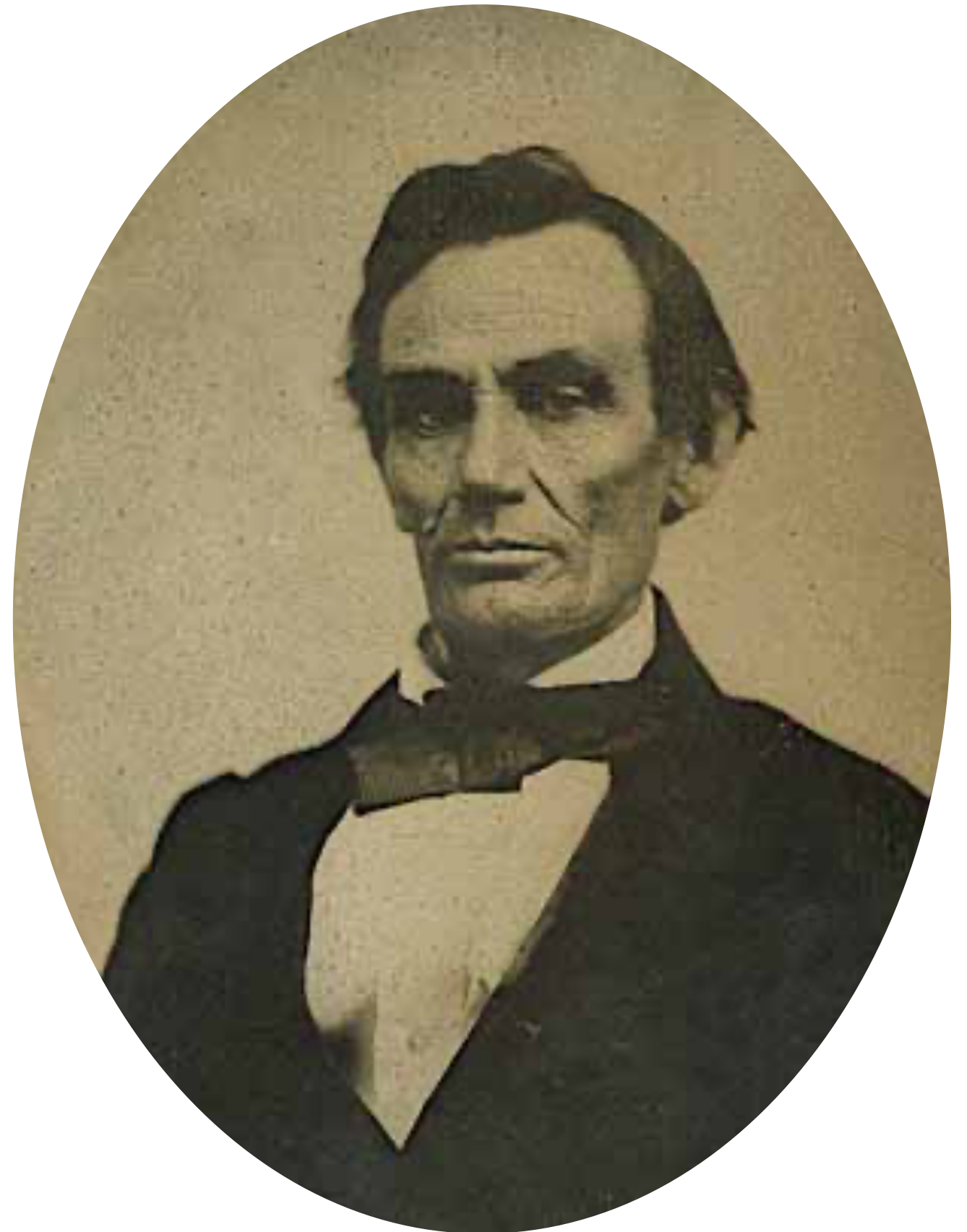
Several days later, the humorist Petroleum V. Nasby (David R. Locke) met Lincoln at Quincy, recording: — *"I never saw a more thoughtful face. I never saw a more dignified face. I never saw so sad a face."*



• (O-11) The original ambrotype in vintage frame



• (O-11) Thomson printed silver print cabinet card



• (O-11) Detail



# MATHEW BRADY

27 FEBRUARY 1860

Mathew Brady (1822-1896)

Abraham Lincoln Cooper Union Portrait

New York, 27 February 1860

Albumen print (George Clark copy after Brady, Smithsonian National Portrait gallery). Carte-de-visite printed by Brady's gallery from a lost copy negative of a retouched original print.

The portrait was taken on the morning of February 27, 1860, just hours before Lincoln delivered his famous Cooper Union speech. This speech and portrait are often credited with significantly boosting Lincoln's political career, with Lincoln himself reportedly saying, *"Brady and The Cooper Union speech made me president of the United States"*.

Lincoln posed for the first time for Mathew Brady, on the day of the Cooper Union speech:

*"Had Abraham Lincoln failed at his do-or-die debut in New York, he would never have won his party's presidential nomination three months later, not to mention election to the White House that November. Such was the impact of a triumph in the nation's media capital. Had he stumbled, none of the challenges that roiled his presidency would ever have tested his iron will..."*

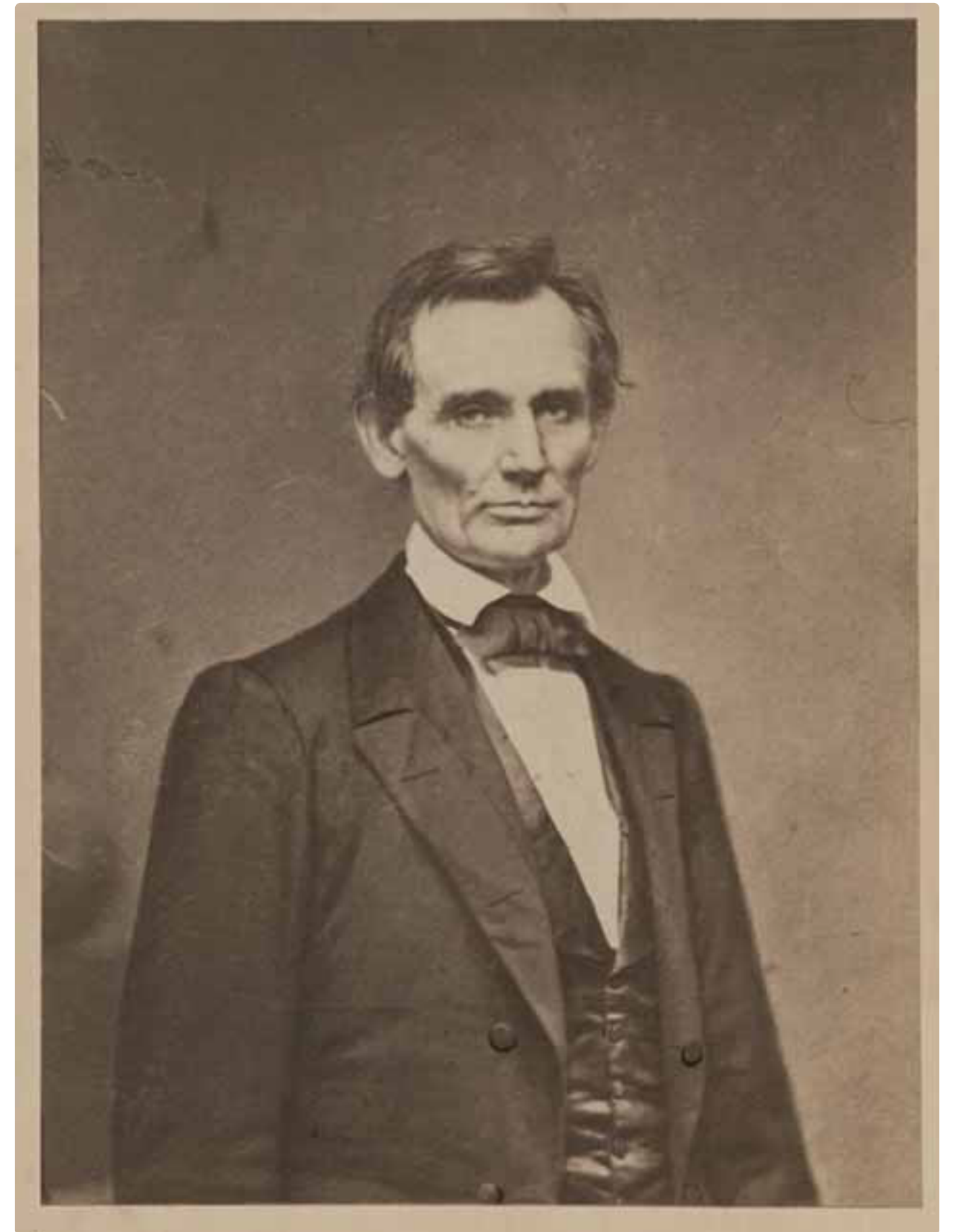
*It can be argued that without Cooper Union, hence without Lincoln at the helm, the United States might be remembered today as a failed experiment that fractured into a North American Balkans.*

*Instead, Abraham Lincoln did triumph in New York. He delivered a learned, witty, and exquisitely reasoned address that electrified his elite audience and, more important, reverberated in newspapers and pamphlets alike until it reached tens of thousands of Republican voters across the North. He had arrived at Cooper Union a politician with more defeats than victories, but he departed politically reborn ... At the Cooper Union, Lincoln became more than a regional curiosity. He became a national leader."* (Harold Holzer)

*«The February 1860 image appeared on Lincoln's campaign pins, making him the first presidential candidate to use a photographic image in a far-reaching way to boost his campaign, allowing Americans to look straight into his eyes.»* (Alice George, Smithsonian Magazine, 12 June 2024)



• (O-17) Carte-de-viste format



• (O-17) A high collar was used to hide Lincoln's unusually long neck



# CHICAGO PHOTOGRAPHER

ca. 31 MARCH 1860

Chicago studio (photographer to be identified)

Abraham Lincoln Candidate for Republican Nominee

Chicago, Illinois, between 31 March and 4 April 1860

Albumen print (Library of Congress, unique)

This rare photograph captures Abraham Lincoln just before he secured the Republican nomination for president. Taken in early April 1860 in Chicago, it shows Lincoln with a youthful and almost cheerful expression, contrasting with many of his more somber portraits. The bright lighting that softens Lincoln's features is notable and may have been intentional, given the growing importance of photographic imagery in political campaigns. The 1860 presidential race was the first to extensively use photographs, with Lincoln's team recognizing the power of visual representation.

*"Bright lighting softens his features. This photograph by an unknown cameraman was posed in Chicago a few days before Lincoln returned to Springfield on April 5, 1860. The negative was sent to M. C. Tuttle in St. Paul for use in printing campaign portraits. It arrived broken. Lincoln presented the only surviving print to William C. Bane, from whom it passed to Bane's neighbor, the present owner, Gilbert L. Ross of Lake Geneva, Wisconsin." Lincoln's features seem youthful and almost happy. William H. Herndon, the law partner who knew him in all his moods, noted that there were times when "it appeared as if Lincoln's soul was fresh from its creator." (Lloyd Ostendorf, O-18)*

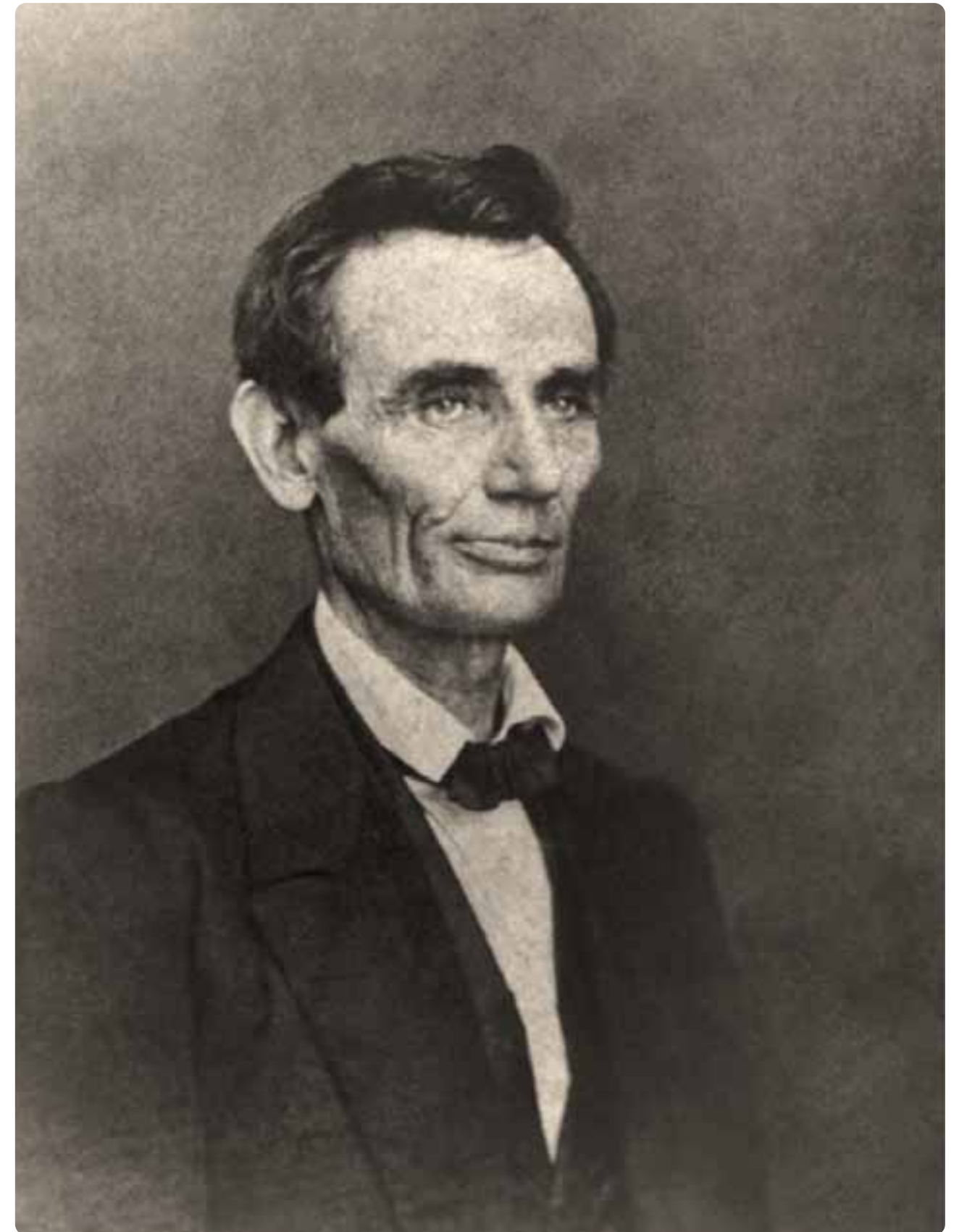
We compare this image with O-35, possibly from the same sitting.

There are not many Chicago photographers linked to Abraham Lincoln in 1860, except Alexander Hesler, a prominent Chicago-based photographer who did photograph Lincoln in 1858 and 1860. However, Hesler's known 1860 session with Lincoln took place on June 3, 1860, in Springfield, Illinois.

A comparison of glass negatives - if preserved - and an analysis of papers and chemical composition could provide more information about the photographer's identity.



• Lincoln's profile (O-35)



• Lincoln's features seem youthful and almost happy. (Lloyd Ostendorf, O-18)



# ALEXANDER HESLER

Springfield, 3 June 1860

Alexander Hesler (1823–1895)

Candidate for Republican Nominee

Springfield, Illinois, 3 June 1860

Platinum print, printed circa 1880 by George B. Ayers, 35x25 cm

Alexander Hesler, a noted commercial photographer based in Chicago, arranged two portrait sessions with Lincoln, in 1858 and 1860. The images from their first session displayed the presidential candidate with disordered and messy hair. During the subsequent election campaign, the Republican National Committee grew concerned that Lincoln might appear unkempt compared to his opponent, Stephen A. Douglas.

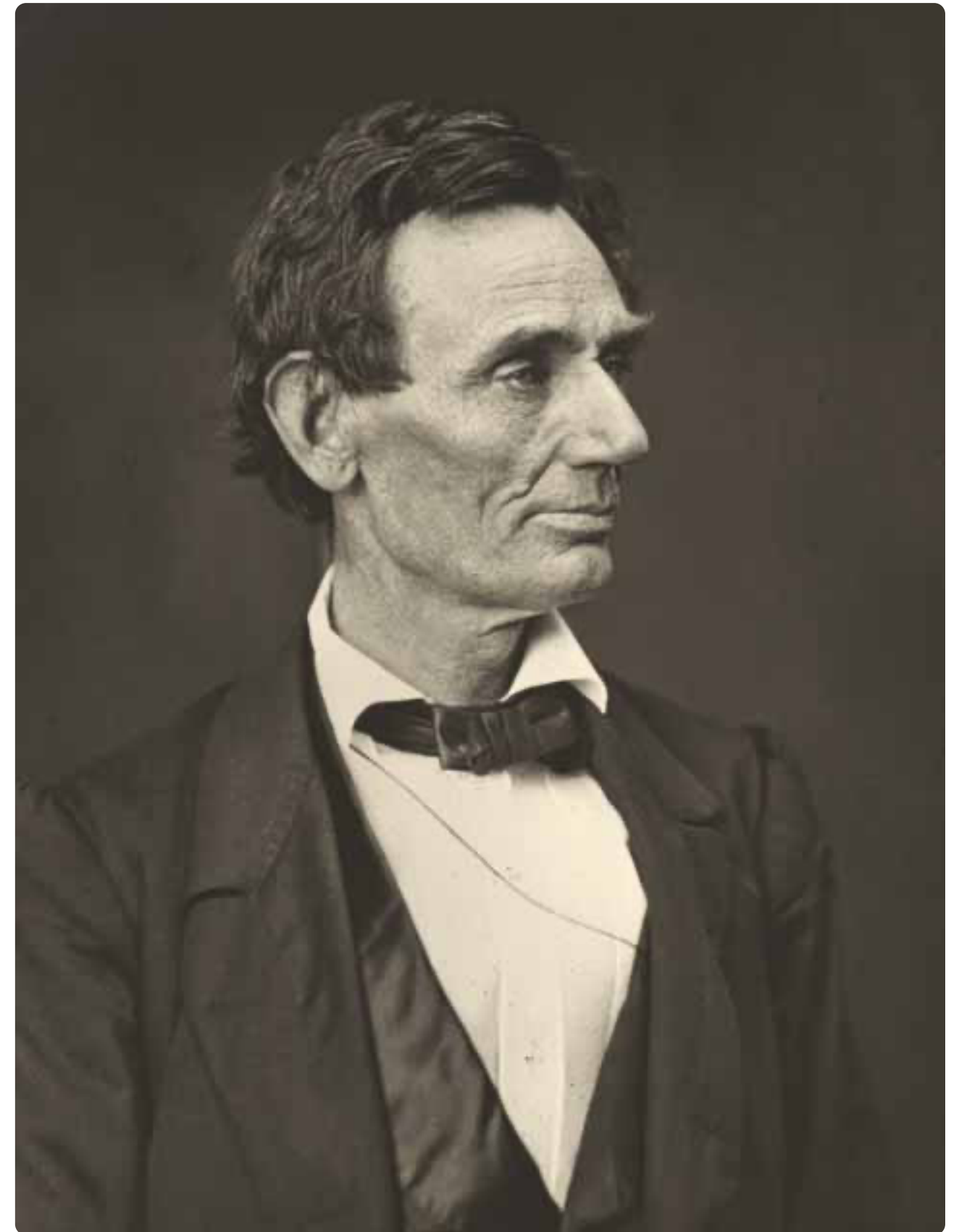
Hesler therefore produced this more dapper and well-groomed representation of the candidate at the second sitting, and these and similar portraits by Mathew Brady were widely distributed as badges. In this first presidential campaign to employ photographs, the decision to make Lincoln a familiar face may well have swayed voters.

The artist George B. Ayers purchased Hesler's studio in 1867, a move that saved its contents from being destroyed when the gallery burned down in the Chicago Fire of 1871. Ayers later reprinted Hesler's glass plate negatives, claiming this image in particular as the "*Original and Best Picture of Abraham Lincoln*," essential for any collector of portraits or Lincoln memorabilia.

Lincoln himself appreciated Hesler's work, reportedly saying of one image: "*That looks better and expresses me better than any I have ever seen; if it pleases the people I am satisfied*". His law partner, William H. Herndon, noted the portrait's ability to capture Lincoln's essence: "*There is the peculiar curve of the lower lip, the lone mole on the right cheek, and a pose of the head so essentially Lincolnian; no other artist has ever caught it.*"



• (O-26) Albumen print (Library of Congress)



• (O-26) Platinum print



# ALEXANDER HEALY

ca: 10-15 NOVEMBER 1860

George Peter Alexander Healy (1813-1894)

Last Portrait of the President-Elect before growing whiskers

Springfield, Illinois, ca. 10 November 1860

Oil on Canvas (National gallery of Art, Former Corcoran gallery)

This significant portrait by George Peter Alexander Healy captures Abraham Lincoln at a pivotal moment in his life, just after his election as President. Commissioned by Chicago businessman and philanthropist Thomas B. Bryan in 1860, the painting was intended to be part of Bryan's *"National Gallery"* in the Bryan Music Hall in Chicago.

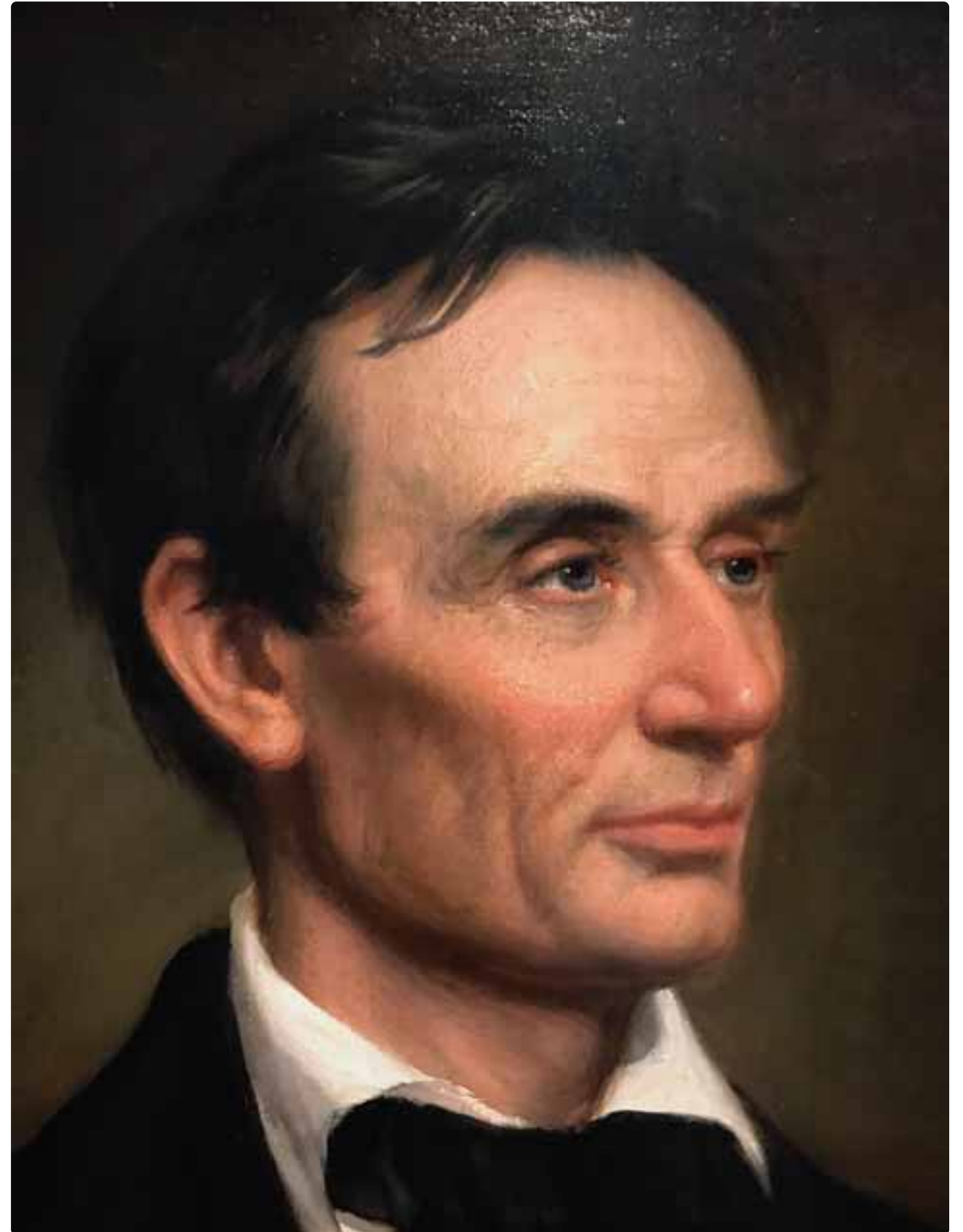
The portrait was created during a transformative period for Lincoln. The lines on his forehead and jowls, along with dark circles beneath his eyes, subtly hint at the demands of the election campaign and the weight of his impending presidency. Yet, as noted by Duncan Phillips, the painting also conveys a sense of Lincoln's famous humor and the *"surprise, the honor, and the vision of supreme opportunity"* that came with his election.

In addition to serving as the model for a 1959 postage stamp commemorating the sesquicentennial of Lincoln's birth, this portrait has hung in the Corcoran Gallery of Art, the White House, and the Lincoln School in southeast Washington, DC.

This portrait is significant as the last painted depiction of Lincoln without a beard.



• Painting by Healy hangs on the wall of the National Gallery of Art, Washington



• Healy painting, detail



# SAMUEL G. ALSCHULER

25 NOVEMBER 1860

Samuel G. Alschuler (1826-1882)

First Portrait of the President-Elect growing whiskers

Chicago, Illinois, 25 November 1860

Original lost. Gelatin silver print of a carte-de-visite print of a retouched albumen print from the lost original negative (Library of Congress)

The first whiskers sprout. Picturing the President-elect with a half-beard, this unique portrait was preserved by Henry C. Whitney, a youthful attorney who had traveled the Illinois circuit with Lincoln. Some thirty years later it turned up in the files of Chicago photographer C. D. Mosher, and was saved from destruction by Herbert Wells Fay, a custodian of the Lincoln tomb.

Adam Goodheart, writing for *The New York Times* on 24 November 2010, provides context for this significant portrait:

*«A few days afterward, Alschuler, a Jewish immigrant from Bavaria (now Germany), sent the portrait to his sitter as “a small token of my esteem.” Lincoln does not seem to have liked it, or even saved it; it was never reproduced, and the sole surviving copy only turned up 30 years later in the files of another Chicago photographer. But Lincoln’s decision inaugurated what might be called the Bearded Age in the nation’s political history: for the next half century, only one man would be elected president without benefit of facial hair.»*

Goodheart further elaborates on the significance of Lincoln’s changing appearance:

*« Lincoln’s beard was only part of what made his physical appearance seem like a break with the presidential past. Compare the Alschuler photograph to Mathew Brady’s portraits of Buchanan and Franklin Pierce, both considered handsome men in their time. Each wears a high white collar with a tightly wrapped neck stock. Lincoln, with Whitmanesque nonchalance, wears his tie loose and his low, soft collar slightly open. The difference looks negligible to modern eyes, but in a 19th-century context, it was like changing out of a business suit and into a polo shirt.»* (Adam Goodheart, *Lincoln: A Beard Is Born*, *The New York Times*, 24 November 2010).

Rediscovered after a long period of oblivion, this portrait retrospectively marks the beginning of a new era in presidential imagery, with Lincoln’s decision to grow a beard influencing political fashion for decades to come.



• (O-40)



# CHRISTOPHER SMITH GERMAN

13 JANUARY 1861

Christopher S. German (1814-1896)

Abraham Lincoln President-elect

Springfield, Illinois, 13 January 1861

Several mounted and dedicated albumen prints (private collections)

Silver print from retouched negative, 151x102 mm, signed and dated «H.W. FAY, 1894»

Thomas D. Jones, a sculptor, accompanied Lincoln to a local photographer, Christopher Smith German, *"to pose him for some pictures he desired to present to a very dear friend"*.

It is considered the first photograph of Lincoln showing him with a full beard. The President-elect personally signed it "A. Lincoln, Springfield, Ill. January 26, 1861" or "A. Lincoln, January 26, 1861 Springfield, Ill". One such print sold for \$146,000 at Christie's.

*"Goggle-eyed and well fed is Lincoln after his face was worked over by an artist..."* (Ostendorf)

The original negative of cabinet size is in the Lincoln Collection of Dr. Herbert Wells Fay of Springfield. The portrait for the original ten-dollar greenback was engraved from this photograph by Frederick Girsch.



• Ten-dollar greenback



• (O-42)



• Variant O-41, 1894 silver print, negative retouched by Fay in cheek



# CHRISTOPHER SMITH GERMAN

9 FEBRUARY 1861

Christopher S. German (1814-1896)

President-Elect with Growing Whiskers

Springfield, Illinois, 9 February 1861

Albumen print on captioned mount (Library of Congress). Different copy images, originals difficult to source. Sixteenth plate tintype copy image (Heritage auction, private collection). Sixteenth plate tintype in thermoplastic case.

This pre-inaugural trip portrait is one of the last photographs taken of Lincoln in Springfield and shows his transformation from the clean-shaven candidate to the bearded president-elect. It captures Lincoln at a pivotal moment, just before he departed for Washington D.C. to assume the presidency.

German's studio, known as the "National Gallery," was located on the West Side Square in Springfield, Illinois. This sitting produced multiple important images of Lincoln, including a unique profile view that, according to Ostendorf, *"reveals the back of Lincoln's head more than perhaps any other portrait."*

The photographer, Christopher Smith German, was born on December 25, 1814, in Adolphustown, Canada. His grandfather, Stophel (Christopher) German (1767-1840), was of German origin and a loyalist who founded Hay Bay Church in Ontario in 1792.



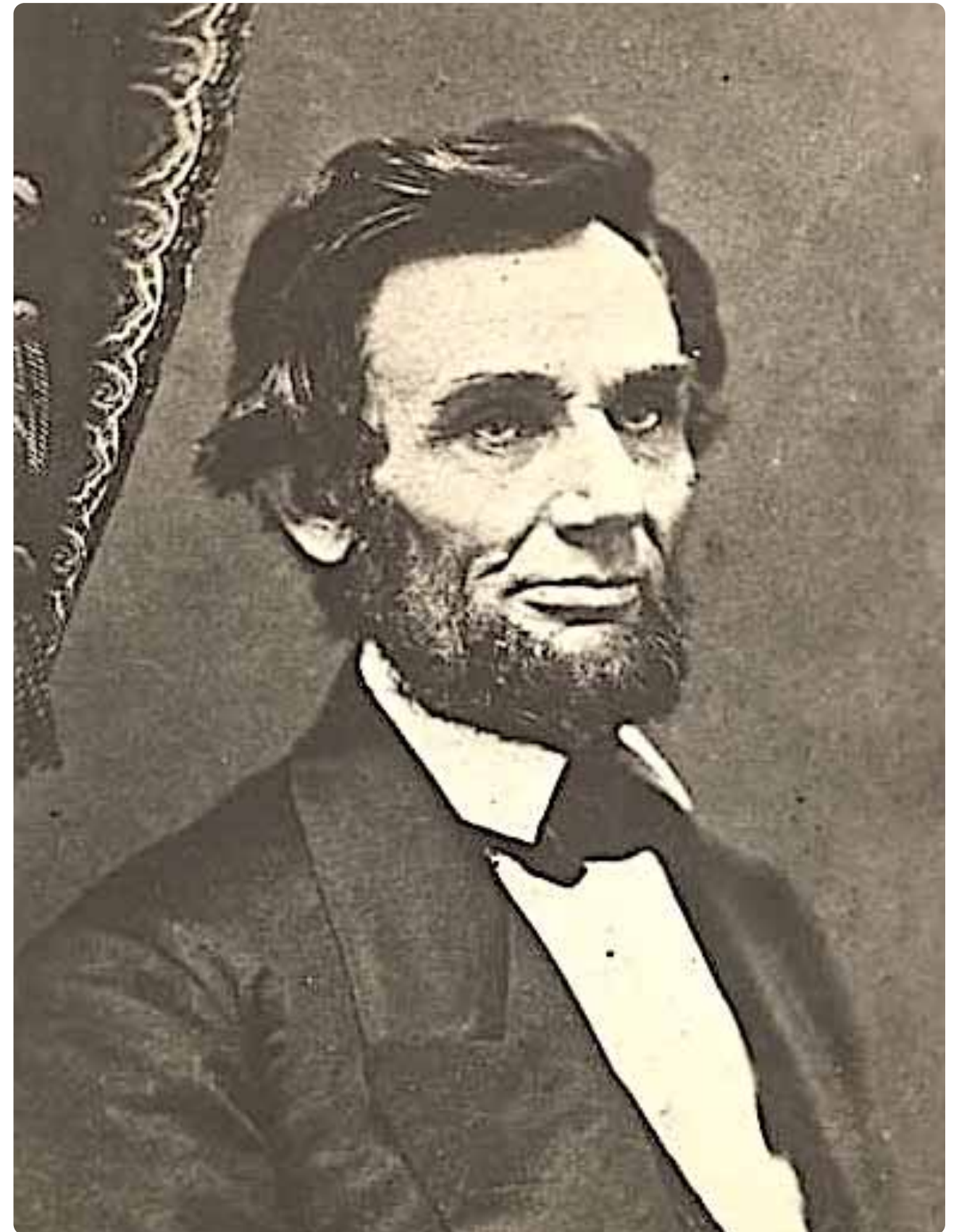
• (O-43)



• (O-44)



• (O-45)



• (O-43) Albumen print, detail



## *SUBJECT DAGUERRETYPE*

18 February 1861 ?

John B. Roberts (1837-1869) ?

Abraham Lincoln on the Inaugural Journey Train ?

Clyde, Wayne Co, NY, 18 February 1861 ?

Sixth plate daguerreotype

This subject daguerreotype, possibly the missing Clyde daguerreotype mentioned in several period newspapers and by local historians, is intriguing but requires further verification and confirmation. If authentic, it would provide a unique glimpse of Lincoln during his transformative journey to Washington D.C.

Lincoln's inaugural train journey began on February 11, 1861, from Springfield, Illinois, and lasted about 12 days, arriving in Washington D.C. on February 23. This journey was a significant event, with Lincoln making numerous stops and speeches along the way. The train passed through Clyde, New York, on February 18, 1861, as part of this journey.

The inclusion of this subject daguerreotype in Lincoln's photographic timeline, at the spot created by iconographers for the lost Clyde portrait, should be considered only for more acute comparison and reasoning. If genuine, it would fill a significant gap in Lincoln's photographic record, capturing him midway through his inaugural journey. Nine days would separate this portrait from the preceding one by German in Springfield, and six more until the next one in Washington by Gardner. We compare facial hair.





# ALEXANDRE GARDNER

24 FEBRUARY 1861

Alexander Gardner (1821-1882)

Abraham Lincoln on arrival, possibly sick and stressed

Mathew Brady's gallery in Washington, 24 February 1861

Albumen print and silver copyprint (National Portrait gallery, Library of Congress). Carte-de-visite printed by Brady's gallery from a lost copy negative of a retouched original print.

The newly elected president first sat for a photograph in Washington, D.C., on February 24, 1861, just after his arrival in the capital and several days before his inauguration. Lincoln went to Mathew Brady's Washington studio where photographer Alexander Gardner took five photographs of the president-elect, including these two, O-52C and O-53.

Lincoln's appearance in these portraits may reflect the stress and fatigue of the last days of his journey to Washington. The strain of the impending presidency and the secretive nature of his arrival in Washington likely contributed to his worn appearance. According to Allan Pinkerton's account, Lincoln was informed of potential assassination plots during his journey. Pinkerton reported that when he told Lincoln about the alleged plot, Lincoln initially refused to change his plans, stating, *"I cannot believe there is a plot to murder me. I should go on to Washington as I had planned, and I cannot show the white feather"*. This revelation, combined with the clandestine nature of his final leg to Washington, undoubtedly added to Lincoln's stress and may be reflected in these portraits taken shortly after his arrival.



• (O-52C) detail



• (O-53)



• (O-53) detail



# WASHINGTON STUDIO

MARCH-APRIL 1861

Washington Studio (photographer to be identified)

First Presidential Portrait

Washington, D.C., March-April 1861

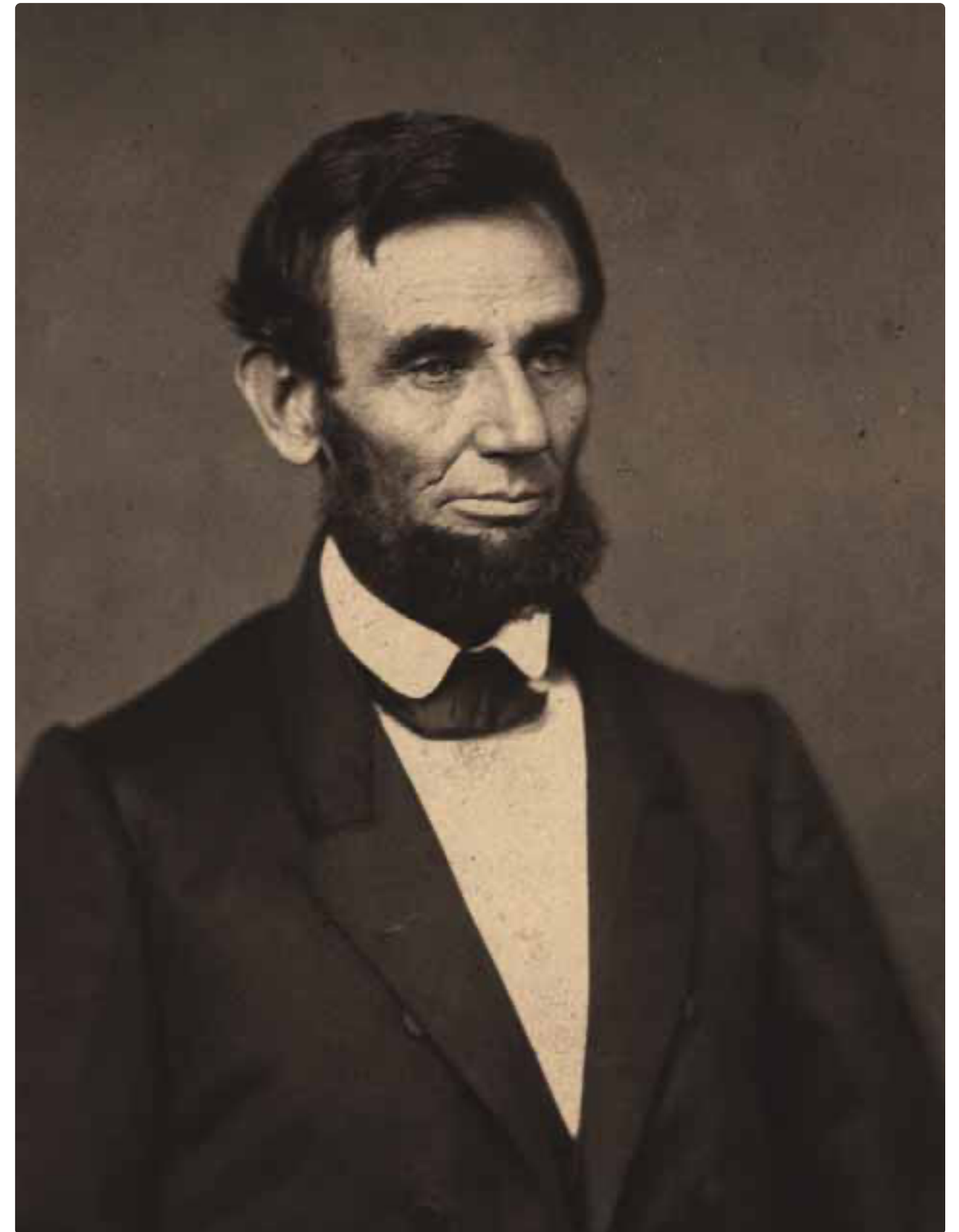
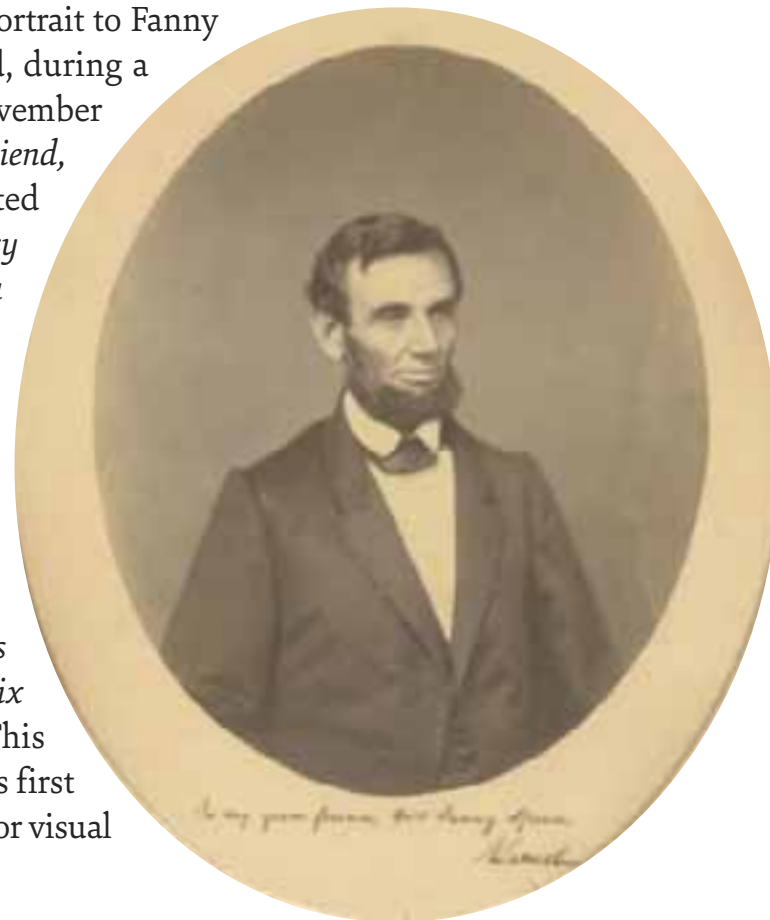
Salt paper print (Smithsonian National Portrait gallery)

The first photographic image of the new president, the few known examples carry imprints of several different photographers: C.D Fredericks & Co. of New York; W.L. Germon and James E. McLees, both of Philadelphia. One mention to Mathew Brady studio ?

Given that Lincoln was staying in Washington during this period, it's likely that the New York and Philadelphia studios mentioned were distributors of the "official" portrait rather than the original photographers, unless they made a special trip to Washington for the sitting.

Lincoln presented a salt paper print of this portrait to Fanny Speed, wife of his close friend Joshua Speed, during a White House dinner on Thanksgiving Day, November 28, 1861. The inscription reads: *"To my good friend, Mrs. Fanny Speed A. Lincoln."* Another dedicated salt print was given on October 1st to *"Mrs. Lucy G. Speed, the mother of James Speed and Joshua F. Speed, all his early friends,"* as noted by Meserve.

Abraham Lincoln's engagement with photography during his presidency was notable. According to the White House Historical Association, *"He was the first president to be photographed extensively and is thought to have sat for as many as thirty-six photographers on sixty-six occasions."* This extensive photographic record began with this first presidential portrait, setting a new precedent for visual documentation of the presidency.



(O-55)



# ALEXANDRE GARDNER

3 OCTOBER 1862

Alexander Gardner (1821-1882)

Antietam Outdoor Portraits

Antietam, Maryland, 3 October 1862

Late 1890 albumen prints (Smithsonian National Portrait gallery)

This series of outdoor portraits captures President Abraham Lincoln visiting General George B. McClellan and his officers at Antietam, Maryland. The photographs were taken by Alexander Gardner on October 3, 1862, just over two weeks after the bloody Battle of Antietam, with a standard stereoscopic or two-lens camera.

Mathew Brady and his team, including Gardner and Timothy O'Sullivan, made significant contributions to the photographic documentation of the Civil War. Brady often risked his life and ultimately sacrificed his personal fortune to create a comprehensive photographic history of the conflict. He captured images at Bull Run, while Gardner accompanied the Army of the Potomac, and O'Sullivan documented Gettysburg. Collectively, Brady and his associates produced over 3,500 photographs throughout the war.

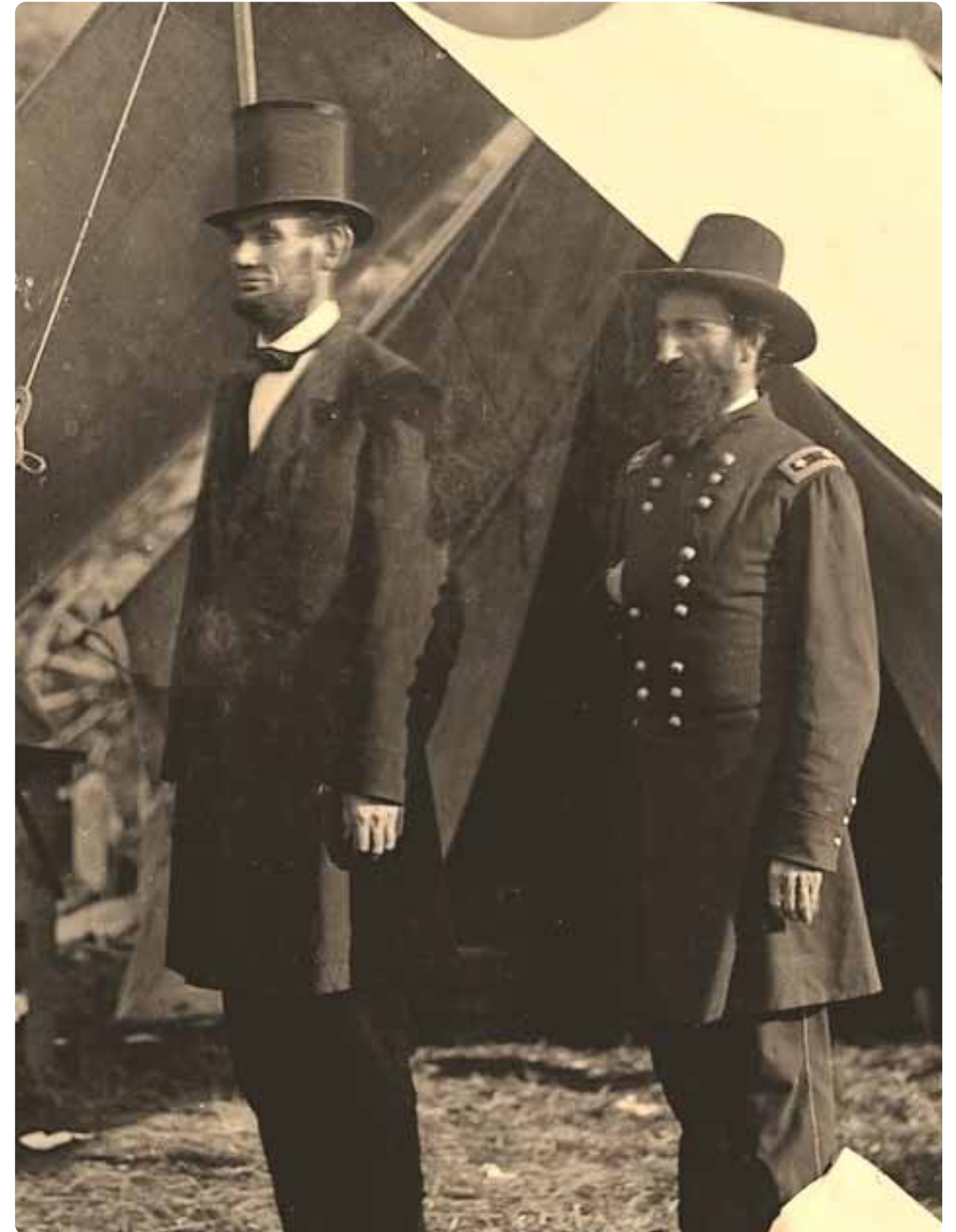
An interesting observation about Lincoln's physique is provided by Colonel Robert L. Wilson, who wrote, *"When standing straight and letting his arms fall down his sides, his fingers would touch a point lower on his legs, nearly three inches, than was usual with other persons."*



• (O-66) Albumen print



• (O-62)



• (O-62) detail



# ALEXANDRE GARDNER

8 NOVEMBER 1863

Alexander Gardner (1821-1882)

Abraham Lincoln's "Gettysburg portrait"

Washington, 8 November 1863

Large matte collodion print (Smithsonian National Portrait gallery)

Sometimes referred to as the "*Gettysburg portrait*". Scholars and enthusiasts alike believe this portrait of Abraham Lincoln, taken on November 8, 1863, eleven days before his famed Gettysburg Address, to be the best photograph of him ever taken. Lincoln's character was notoriously difficult to capture in pictures.

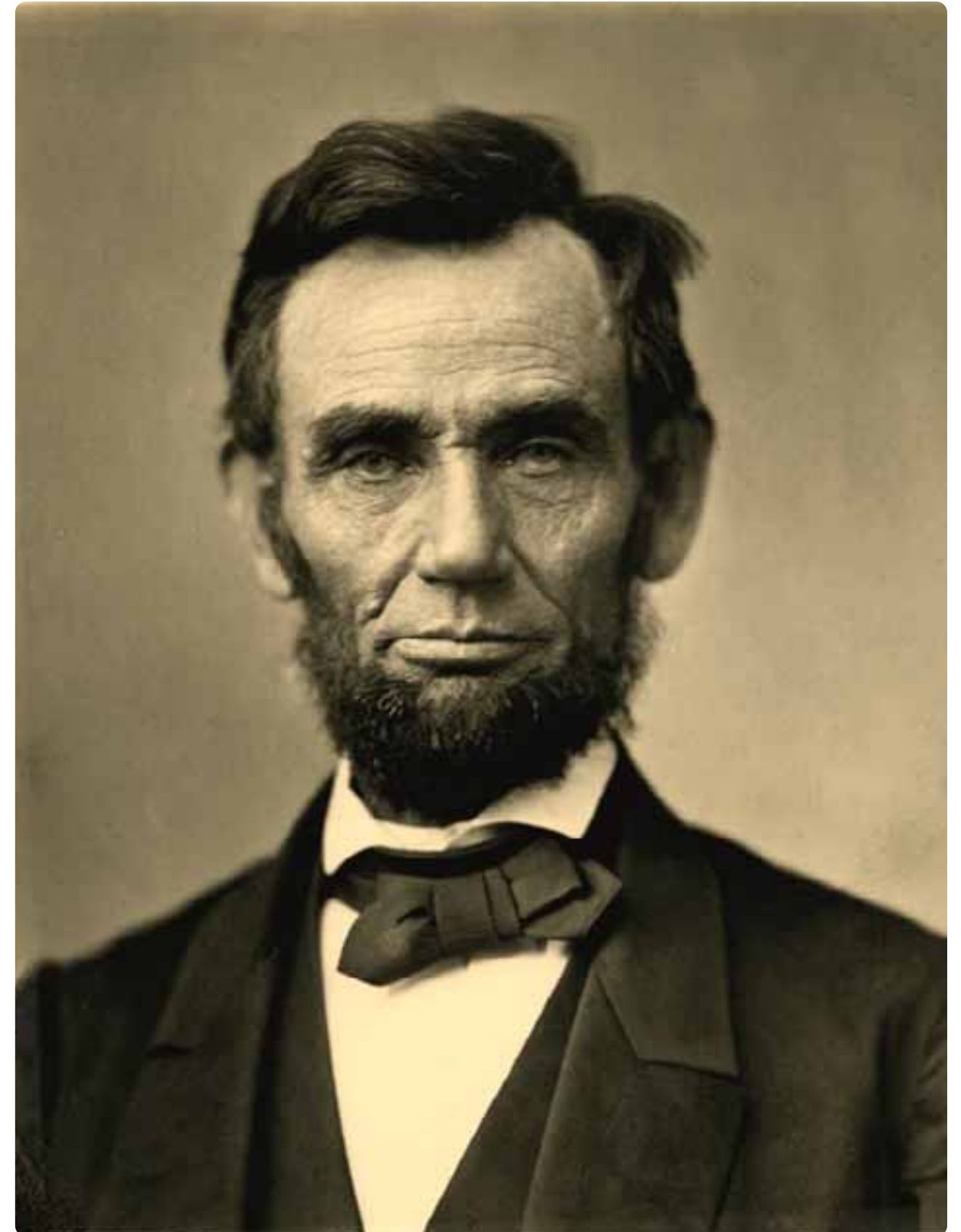
Gardner's innovative close-up portrait style contrasted with the typical full-length portraits of the era, allowing him to capture the expressive contours of Lincoln's face and his penetrating gaze more effectively.

Recent research suggests that Gardner was Lincoln's favorite photographer. This portrait session likely occurred after Lincoln had seen Gardner's images from Gettysburg, potentially influencing the president's approach to the Gettysburg Address. Some scholars speculate that the rhetoric of the Gettysburg Address was shaped in part by Lincoln's photographic encounter with the battle dead captured by Gardner.

Moses Parker Rice (1839-1925) copyrighted positive prints of this portrait for distribution in Canada, along with other photographs, while still giving credit for the negatives to Gardner's studio. This detail provides insight into the complex history of ownership and distribution of Civil War-era photographs.



• (O-77)



• (O-77)



# MATHEW BRADY

8 JANUARY 1864

Mathew Brady (1822-1896)

President Abraham Lincoln

Washington, 8 January 1864

Albumen print (Smithsonian National Portrait gallery). Carte-de-visite printed by Brady's gallery from a lost copy negative of a retouched original print (O-84).

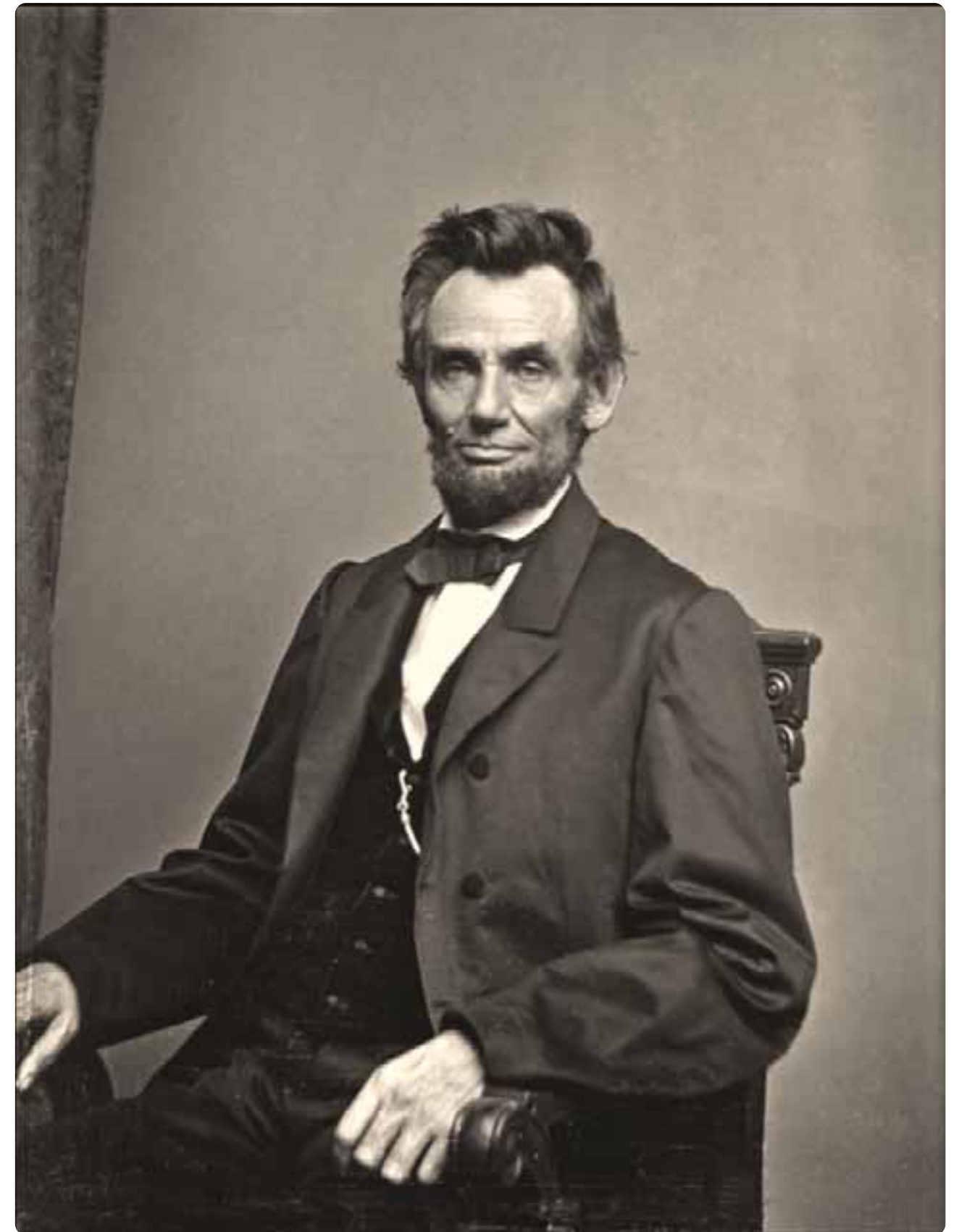
This portrait of Abraham Lincoln was taken by Mathew Brady himself during a multi-pose session on January 8, 1864, in his Washington studio. The session produced five photographs, with this image becoming one of the most iconic representations of the 16<sup>th</sup> President.

Lincoln visited Brady's studio on at least three occasions in 1864, but this January 8th sitting yielded particularly significant results. The portrait has become deeply ingrained in American visual culture, serving as the basis for Lincoln's image on both the penny and the five-dollar bill. The pose has recently been widely seen — in somewhat adapted form — as the cover illustration of Seth Grahame-Smith's *Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter* (2010).

Lincoln himself commented on this series of photographs, stating, "I don't know that I have any favorite portrait of myself; but I have thought that if I looked like any of the likenesses of me that have been taken, I look most like that one."



• Three cartes de visites of the multi-pose session (O-84, O85, O-86)



• (O-84)



# ALEXANDRE GARDNER

5 FEBRUARY 1865

Alexander Gardner (1821-1882)

President Abraham Lincoln

Washington, D.C., 5 February 1865

Albumen print (Smithsonian National Portrait gallery)

This contemporary albumen print is the only known likeness made from the broken, and soon discarded, original negative created by Alexander Gardner in Washington, D.C. on February 5, 1865. The portrait is significant as it captures Lincoln just weeks before his second inauguration and his assassination.

Previously thought to have been taken in April, research has confirmed the February 5, 1865 date, as recorded in the diary of portrait painter Matthew Wilson, who accompanied Lincoln to the studio. The sitting occurred five days after the momentous passing of the Thirteenth Amendment in the House of Representatives, possibly contributing to Lincoln's more relaxed demeanor. This series, comprising 14 images, is considered Lincoln's last formal portrait session.

Frank Goodyear, the National Portrait Gallery's photo curator, notes, *"This is the last formal portrait of Abraham Lincoln before his assassination."*

*I really like it because Lincoln has a hint of a smile.*

*The inauguration is a couple of weeks away; he can understand that the war is coming to an end; and here he permits, for one of the first times during his presidency, a hint of better days tomorrow."*



• (O-116)



• (O-118)





• XVIII •

## VARIOUS PERSPECTIVES OF THIS DISCOVERY

- *A Photographic Tour-de-force*
- *A Decisive Moment in History*
- *Lincoln's metamorphosis*

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## • A PHOTOGRAPHIC TOUR-DE-FORCE •

The daguerreotype process, with its inherent limitations, doesn't lend itself to improvisation or photographic agility. It requires deliberate, methodical work - more akin to the pace of a rhinoceros than the agility of a squirrel. The operator is constrained by dangerous chemicals, a makeshift laboratory, and a cumbersome chamber, all subject to a strict three-hour timeline:

1. An hour of preparation to ready the plate
2. One precious hour to use the prepared plate
3. A final, indispensable hour for development and finishing

Capturing a portrait of a man on a briefly stopped train would have been a remarkable photographic achievement. Several factors may have contributed to this potential feat:

- The train's punctual arrival, crucial for the photographer's preparation
- The photographer's ingenuity in utilizing the woodpile along the tracks, as reported by Joseph Howard Jr in the *New York Times*
- Possible pre-planning, including a stable platform for the tripod and calculations of the train's exact stopping position

Despite any planning, the photographer might have been surprised by Lincoln's unusual height. Even with the President-elect descending two steps from the platform, he likely still towered over the camera, potentially resulting in an unconventional angle for the portrait.

This image, if authentic, would stand outside the usual conventions of Daguerrian portraiture. As our appreciation for early photography has grown over recent decades, we've come to recognize the inventiveness and creativity of the first generation of operators, who overcame significant challenges to produce remarkable images in diverse and difficult conditions.

Over the past few decades, our appreciation for early photography has deepened significantly. We've come to recognize the remarkable inventiveness and creativity of the first generation of photographers. Their ability to overcome substantial challenges - producing images from mountaintops, in the middle of deserts, or in other extreme conditions - continues to captivate us.

If authenticated, this daguerreotype of Lincoln could serve as a compelling example of the ingenuity and perseverance that characterized the early days of photography. It might also remind us of how easily pioneering achievements can be overlooked in the broader narrative of art history.



• American Daguerreotypist equipment, late 1850s

## • A DECISIVE MOMENT •

### The Story of a Momentous Stop

The story of Abraham Lincoln's brief stop in Clyde became a defining chapter in the village's history, potentially surpassing even the Erie Canal's breakthrough in local lore. While the village's Saxon origins and its development by Augustus of Zeng may fade from memory, the five-minute presidential train stop will remain a cherished local story.

### A Pivotal Choice

Lincoln's stop in Clyde may have been influenced by the village's connection to William Stow, a notable figure in New York State's economic and political spheres. Stow, the son-in-law of Baron de Zeng, had a reputation for rallying various communities, including Puritans and Quakers, to support Lincoln. Interestingly, Horace Greeley, the influential editor of the New York Tribune, had visited Stow just a month before the election, potentially highlighting Clyde's political significance. However, Stow's apparent absence on the morning of Lincoln's visit might explain the brevity of the President-elect's initial appearance on the platform. This circumstance may have inadvertently created an opportunity for John Roberts to capture his daguerreian portrait.

### The Photographer's Challenge

John Roberts, the local photographer, faced considerable challenges that day. The extreme cold made the newer collodion glass negative technique impractical. Instead, as neighboring journalist William Tinsley from the *Lyons Republican* reported, Roberts relied on the daguerreotype process, which was more reliable under harsh conditions but required precision and patience.

Roberts' numbed fingers mishandled the plate during development, resulting in unusual tarnish patterns around the image. Under normal circumstances, such a plate might have been discarded. However, given the unique nature of the moment, Roberts preserved this imperfect yet potentially significant image.

### The Journey Continues

While Clyde's stop became a treasured memory for the town, for Lincoln and his traveling party, it was just one moment in a transformative journey. As reported by Joseph Howard Jr. in the *New York Times*, Mary Todd Lincoln took an active role in managing her husband's appearance as they approached the East Coast.



### A New Era of Political Journalism

This inaugural journey marked several firsts in American history. It may have been one of the earliest instances of a president-elect traveling with reporters, inaugurating a new era of political journalism. Journalists accompanying Lincoln were able to file real-time reports using telegraph lines that paralleled the rail route—a revolutionary development for political reporting at the time.

### A Decisive Moment

Notably, on the very same day, 18 February 1861, in Montgomery, Alabama, Jefferson Davis took the oath of office to become the Provisional President of the Confederate States of America. Though overshadowed by subsequent events such as the Civil War and threats to Abraham Lincoln's life, this photographic episode in Clyde offers an intriguing glimpse into American political and photographic history.

For John Roberts, it likely presented both challenges and opportunities.



## • LINCOLN’S METAMORPHOSIS •

If authenticated, this daguerreotype could offer a unique lens into Lincoln’s inaugural journey. Created under rushed circumstances and bearing technical imperfections, it may contribute to our understanding of both Lincoln’s evolving public image and the mid-19th-century advancements in photography.

The significance of this potential discovery hinges on careful scholarly examination and interpretation by an engaged audience. Historical accounts suggest that Mary Todd Lincoln played an active role in refining her husband’s public presentation during this journey, shaping his transformation from a humble rail-splitter to a polished statesman.

### Bridging Two Narratives

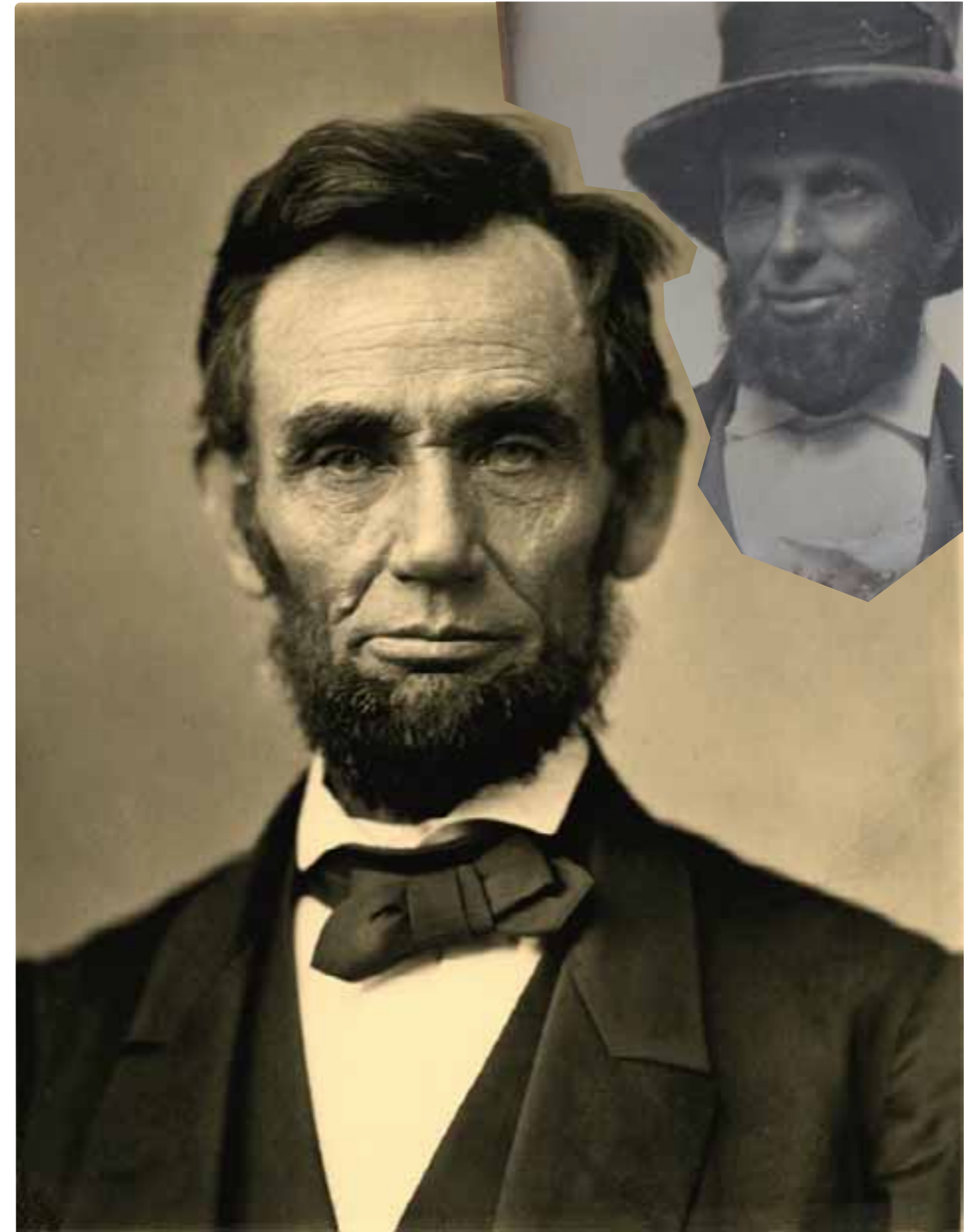
This brief stop in Clyde offers a unique perspective on Lincoln’s metamorphosis as both a political figure and public icon. Early written accounts often portray him as modest and unkempt—a man of everyday life from a small Western village. In contrast, official photographic portraits present him as a severe yet elegant leader.

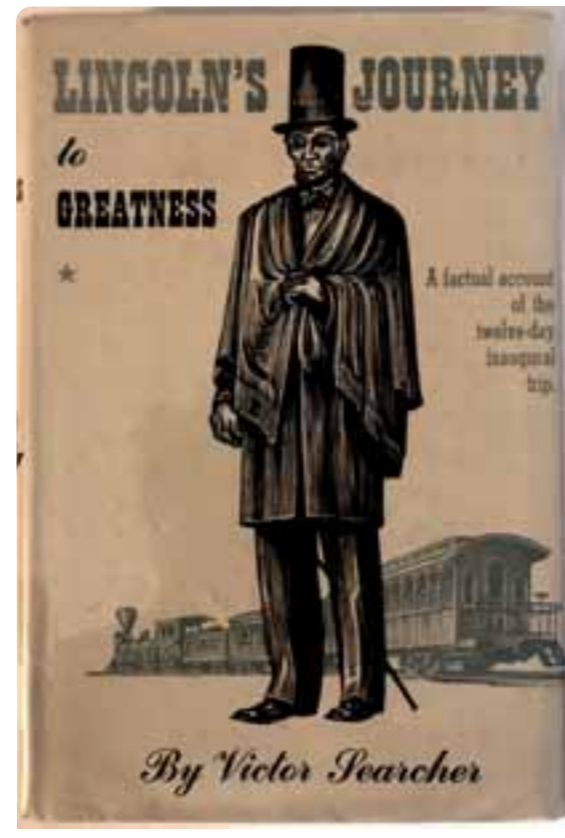
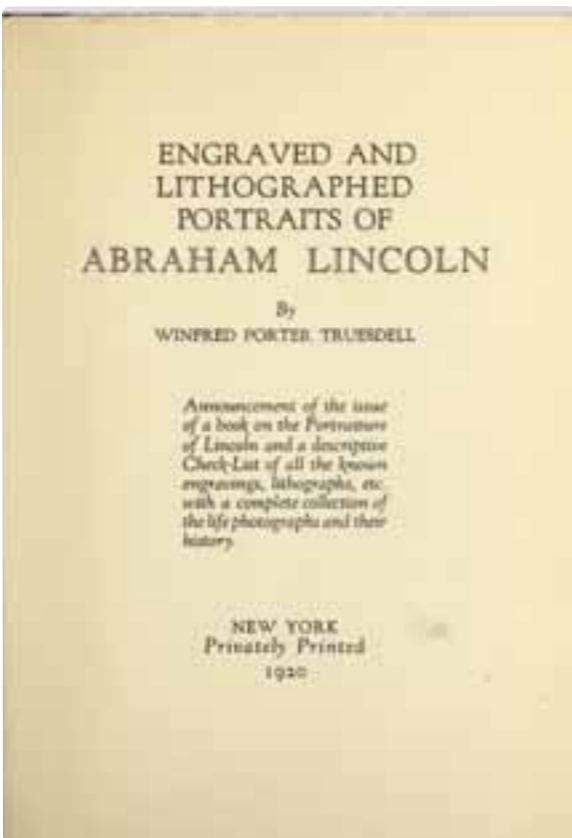
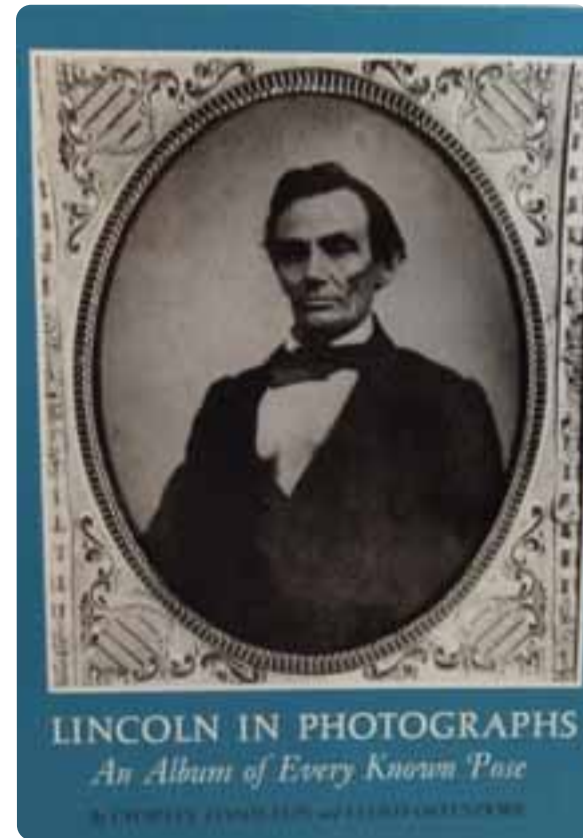
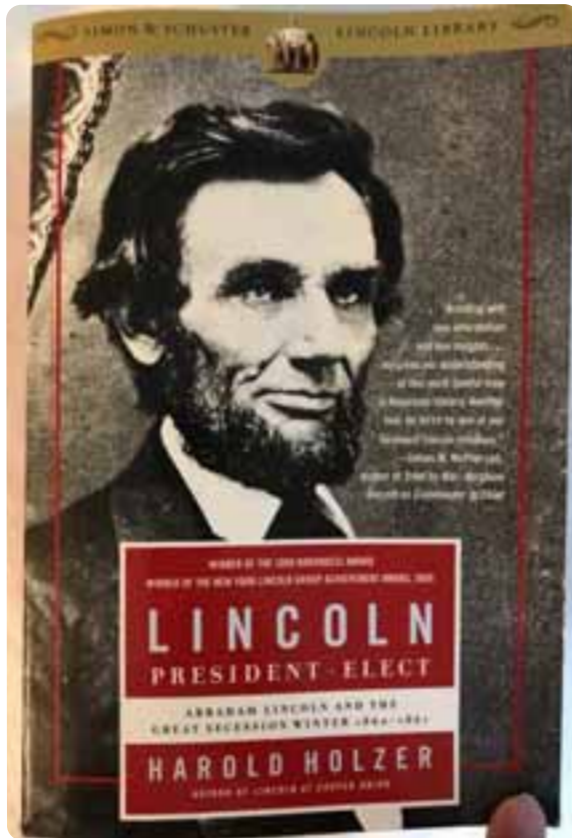
The discovery of this daguerreotype, if authenticated, raises compelling questions about this transformation. It could serve as a visual bridge between early depictions of Lincoln and the later, groundbreaking formal portraits that solidified his image as a national figure.

Such an artifact would not only deepen our understanding of Lincoln but also highlight how small moments can illuminate larger historical narratives.

### A Call to action

We invite readers and researchers to share any relevant insights or evidence regarding this intriguing historical question. Your contributions can further scholarly investigation into the lost daguerreotype and its potential significance. Diverse perspectives and ideas are invaluable, as they enrich our understanding of this complex historical puzzle.





• XIX •

## RESOURCES AND INDICES

- *F.A.Q. Section: Commonly Asked Questions*
- *Selected Bibliography*
- *Newspapers*

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# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## HOW DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE EXISTENCE OF A MISSING CLYDE PORTRAIT ?

- Joseph Howard (*New York Times*) page 97
- Secondary: Victor Searcher before Lloyd Ostendorf page 71

## HOW DO WE KNOW THIS CLYDE PORTRAIT COULD BE DAGUERREOTYPE ?

- William T. Tinsley (*The Lyons Republican*) page 99
- Secondary : Wayne Morrison page 135
- Secondary : Hugh Miner page 147

## WHY WOULD THE DAGUERREOTYPE PROCESS BE USED SO LATE (FEB. 1861) ?

- The daguerreotype was possibly a sponsor's decision page 143
- Weather report : very cold for safe collodion use page 127

## HOW MANY DAGUERREIAN PORTRAITS DO WE KNOW OF LINCOLN ?

- Only one daguerreotype and two copy-dags page 23
- Several true disappointments page 31

## HOW COULD SUCH A DEFECTIVE PLATE SURVIVE (TARNISH ISSUE) ?

- The train left quickly, no time left for another portrait page 67

## WHY IS THE PORTRAIT SO MODEST IN DIMENSIONS ?

- The size corresponds to the local artist's capabilities page 157

## WHY WOULD THE PRESIDENT-ELECT WEAR SUCH POOR CLOTHES ?

- Mary Todd and the image of her husband page 77
- Dirt and smoke from a wood engine locomotive in 1861 page 61
- Joseph Howard Jr. (*New York Times*) on the appearance page 95
- J. N. Larned (*Buffalo Express*) on appearance page 101
- Gibson Harris on Lincoln's personal appearance page 107
- Martin P. Rindlaub on Lincoln's appearance page 109
- Similar stovepipe hat with mourning band page 167
- Investigation of an old over-coat page 171

## WHY WOULD THE PRESIDENT-ELECT NOT BE WEARING A NECKTIE ?

- Nicolay reports a clever stratagem to save resting time page 83
- Howard reports improved appearance after Albany page 95
- Joseph Pain reports the President's interrupted rest page 129

## WHY WOULD THE PRESIDENT-ELECT HAVE SUCH A BUSHY BEARD ?

- Grace Bedell's advice page 111
- Walt Whitman describes a black bush head of hair page 115
- Secondary on Public Persona : Ted Widmer page 117

## HOW COULD THE PRESIDENT-ELECT BE SMILING ?

- Discussion, hint of a smile, Nicolay page 193
- Discussion of smile in Healy portrait page 227
- J. N. Larned (*Buffalo Express*) page 101
- Various Newspapers reproduced page 263

## WHY WOULD THE PRESIDENT-ELECT LOOK SO YOUNG ?

- The last days before bad news, Ward Lamon page 87
- Comparison with antebellum Healey portrait page 227
- Comparison with antebellum photographic portraits page 229

## HOW DO THE ANTHROPOMETRIC MEASUREMENTS COMPARE ?

- Anthropometric Measurements page 181
- Presence of moles and scars page 185

## HOW CAN WE DEDUCE THIS IS AN OUTDOOR PORTRAIT ?

- Lighting & Shadows page 175
- Empty background page 177

## WHY WAS SUCH A PORTRAIT NEVER PUBLISHED ?

- John B. Roberts' short life remain an open case page 141
- Papers of William Stow in NYPL, note for a Daguerreotype page 145

## WHICH ARE THE CHALLENGES OF INVESTIGATING LINCOLN PORTRAITS ?

- False Hopes and True Disappointments page 31

# SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

*“Iconography, the study of the commercial and political impetus for and emotional power of the period Lincoln images that modern scholars had too often relegated to the realm of mere illustration. I would contend—and suppose I have been arguing in print and books and lectures ever since — that while the products themselves were typically inspired by profit, not politics or public service, they came to testify convincingly to their owners' political and patriotic impulses, occupying honored places in the family home where religious icons of old had once held unchallenged dominance.*

*Moreover, it appeared to me, these images — though often clumsy, flawed, retouched, or disguised to hide their origins (or their original copyright) —helped not only to illustrate Lincoln's emergence from prairie politician to presidential candidate, chief executive, emancipator, and martyr but to influence this image metamorphosis as well.*

*I learned, too, that Lincoln himself, so famously modest and diffident about his personal appearance, so quick to poke fun at his own homeliness, had proven surprisingly cooperative with photographers, painters, sculptors, and even the engravers and lithographers whose works were based on original models from life. Rarely had Lincoln refused to pose for such artists. Seldom had he refused a request for an autograph that could be reproduced on steel or stone. In short, I argued, Lincoln, although a self-proclaimed “indifferent judge” of his own images, was a very willing subject for those who agreed to immortalize it. He seemed miraculously aware of the importance of such pictures in introducing him to the public, winning him elections, enhancing his reputation, and illustrating his accomplishments.”*

*“When the Lincoln image was born in 1860, pictures were rare and precious commodities to most Americans. Art museums did not yet exist, newspapers did not yet publish photographs, and mass-produced pictures were purchased to express emotion, patriotism, and political loyalties—not merely to decorate. Motion pictures, of course, had yet to be invented. Television, computers, and the World Wide Web were unimaginable. Amid today's relentless cacophony of pictures, that the Lincoln image can continue to inspire artists, invite commissions, and both thrill and infuriate audiences demonstrates the unique and indelible power it continues to exert.*

*Why is this so? After so much study, so much renewal of interest in both period and modern Lincoln iconography, the question remains unanswered. Whether it remains unanswerable depends on the next generation of historians.”* (Extract from Harold Holzer, *The Lincoln Visual Image: A Personal Journey of Discovery*)

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*Buffalo Morning Express*, 21 February 1861

*The Clyde Weekly Times*, 16 February 1861

*The Clyde Weekly Times*, 23 February 1861

*Erie Weekly Gazette*, 21 February 1861

*Lexington Globe*, 22 November 1860

*Lyons Republican*, February 1861 (quoted)

*New York Times*, 19-21 February 1861

*New York Tribune*, 19-21 February 1861

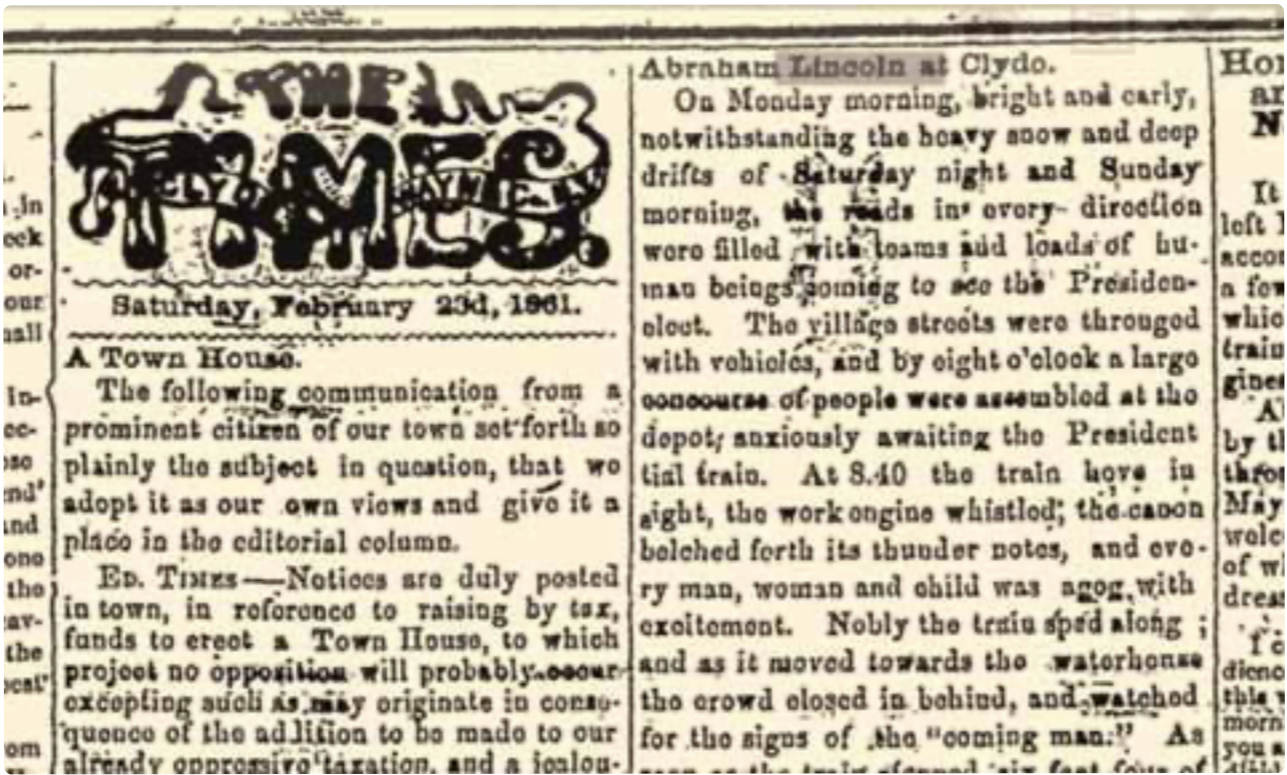
*New York World*, 19 February 1861.

*Ohio State Journal* (Columbus), 16 February 1861

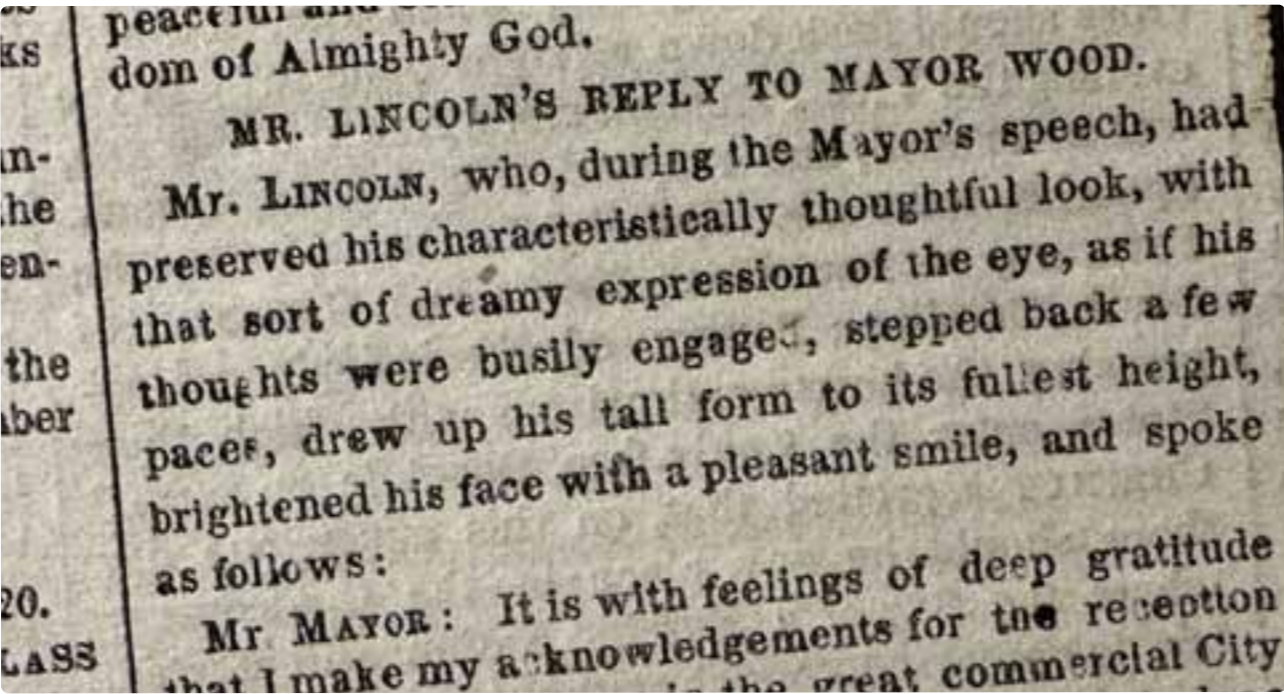
*Rochester NY Evening Express*, 10 May 1865



- *The New York Tribune*, 20 February 1861, «President-elect stepped out of his carriage, smiling and waving to the onlookers...» ; «Mr. Lincoln rode with his hat off, bowing to the crowds with quiet dignity and a sincere demeanor that impressed all who saw him....»



- *The Clyde weekly Times*, 23 February 1861, «On Monday morning, bright and early, notwithstanding...»



- *The New York Times*, 21 February 1861, «Mr Lincoln... brightened his face with a pleasant smile»





- Frederick de Bourg Richards. *Abraham Lincoln raising a flag at Independence Hall, Philadelphia, in honor of the admission of Kansas to the Union on Washington's Birthday. Philadelphia, 22 February 1861* (enlarged detail) In this view taken shortly after sunrise, "Lincoln is closer to the center of the flag, standing bare-headed above the third star from the left.... Tad leans on the rail with chin in hand, gazing at the spectators." (Ostendorf, pp. 73-4).

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