

MICHIGAN (BROWN)  
FORGERIES

DRAWER 6A

FORGERIES

71.2009.085.05527



# Lincoln Forgeries

William P. Brown

Excerpts from newspapers and other  
sources

From the files of the  
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

# THE RAVENNA TIMES

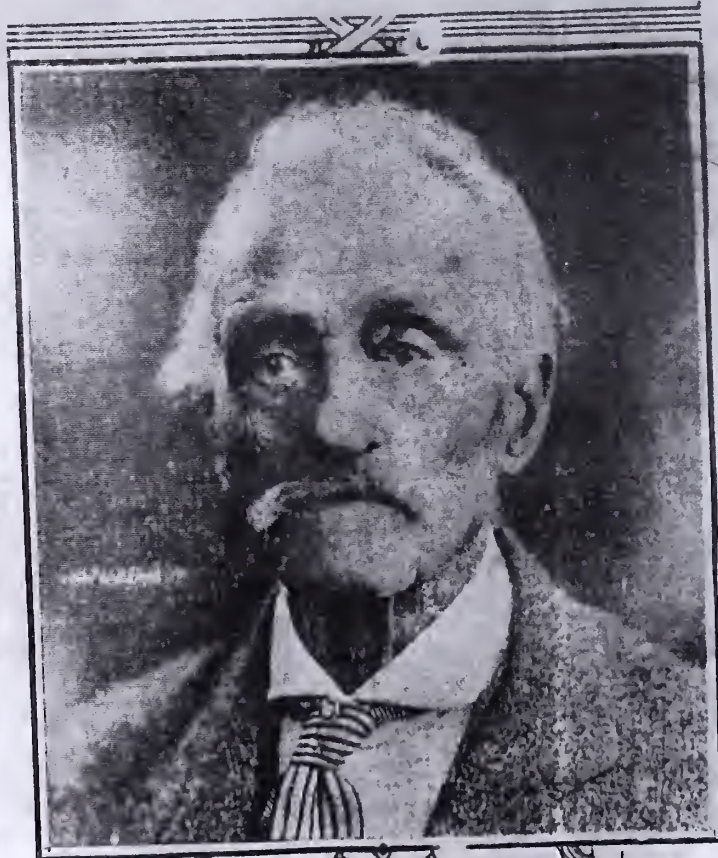
RAVENNA, MICH., FRIDAY, May 1, 1931

RAVENNA, MICH., FRIDAY, May 1, 1931

## WILLIAM P. BROWN

Ravenna's Nonagenarian

Will be 94 years old, July 1st, 1931





It is not generally known that Ravenna has a man who has important historical events connected with his life. The following appeared in the Grand Rapids Herald of October 4, 1929 at which time Mr. Brown was made a member of the Herald Nonagenarian Club.

### Was Coachman for Mrs. Lincoln One Year Following Close of Civil War; Has Had an Adventurous Life.

RAVENNA, Oct. 3.—Living in retirement in Ravenna, Ia and aged man, he was 91 years old July 1st, who for one year following the Civil war was coachman for Mrs. Lincoln, wife of the martyred president.

He is William F. Brown. His early life was filled with travel and adventure. Born 29 miles south of Chicago, he lived in that locality until he was 17 years old. His father was born in Rhine-on-Rhine and his mother in Harkinsburg.

At the age of 17 Mr. Brown started with a Dr. Smith of Chicago on a trip around the world. He stayed with this family seven years, traveling as their valet. They visited England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Germany, Sweden, and Norway for sufficient lengths of time for Mr. Brown to acquire a speaking knowledge of these languages. Finally because of lack of funds the trip was abandoned, the family could not keep Mr. Brown and he was thrown on his own resources. By means or working his passage he finally reached Chicago.

#### Enlists in Army

In 1862 William enlisted as a three-month man in Company H. of the 20th regiment of the Union army. When Lincoln called for longer enlistments Mr. Brown joined company B of the 29 regiment of U. S. C. T. [United States Colored Troops] He served as corporal here and carried the Union colors in 13 of the major battles of the war. When he gave up the colors at Springfield, Ill., on Nov. 6, 1865 with his name engraved on the staff, the flag was only as large as a bandana handkerchief. At the battle of Petersburg, Mr. Brown helped to carry the powder which blew up the fort.

The principal events that he vividly recalls are the seven day battles of Cold Harbor and Lee's surrender at the Spottsylvania Courthouse. Immediately after war he became private coachman for Mrs. Lincoln. Following this, he returned to Chicago, engaging in the barber trade and was there when the fire swept over the city, destroying everything

#### Lived with Indians

Then he decided on a trip to the west. Here he got a job carrying mail for the Indians in South Dakota and later married Mary, daughter of White Buffalo, chief of the Deer tribe of the Sioux Indians of the Wapacha river. He now has three children on the reservation at Pierre S. D. He recalls with pleasure the many times he sat in council with Sitting Bull. For ten years he acted as interpreter for the Sioux Indians and then returned to Chicago.

Mr. Brown left Chicago, with a covered wagon and a span of mules for a trip to the far west May 1, 1900. His sole companions on the trip to Los Angeles and back were four

Upon his return to Chicago, receiving word that one of his brothers was ill in Michigan, he came here and stayed until after the brother's death. He then decided to stay in Ravenna and bought a little farm of three acres just on the edge of town. On January 10, 1917, he married Emma Evans.

Mr. Brown enjoys the best of health and hopes to reach the century mark. Of a family of two sisters and five brothers, he is the only living member.

The above article came to the attention of Harry D. Sickles of Chicago, a collector of curios of Abraham Lincoln and family. Noticing that Mr. Brown had been a coachman for Mrs. Lincoln thought that perhaps he might have something that she had remembered her old coachman with that might interest him. In February 1930, Mr. Sickles visited Ravenna and called on Mr. Brown, and sure enough found that he had a box containing books, papers and photographs, that Mrs. Lincoln had given Mr. Brown and which he had preserved and brought with him to Ravenna. These Mr. Sickles obtained and he regards them as a valuable addition to his collection. It was by a mere accident however that the box and contents was not destroyed, when the Brown residence burned in April 1929, as at house cleaning time Mrs. Brown had them removed to the barn counting them as "trash". Mr. Sickles, desiring to know the genuineness or his find called on Mr. Frank Thatcher, who had known Mr. Brown since his residence in Ravenna and had transacted his business certified to the probable validity of the articles in Mr. Brown's possession and which Mr. Sickles regarded as very valuable and an important part of his collection.

# THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN ASSOCIATION

FORMERLY THE LINCOLN CENTENNIAL ASSOCIATION

LOGAN HAY, PRESIDENT  
J. H. HOLBROOK, TREASURER  
PAUL M. ANGLE, SECRETARY



## PURPOSES:

"To observe each anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln; to preserve and make more readily accessible the landmarks associated with his life; and to actively encourage, promote and aid the collection and dissemination of authentic information regarding all phases of his life and career."

FIRST NATIONAL BANK BUILDING  
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

June 23, 1931.

## W A R N I N G

To the Members of the Abraham Lincoln Association:

The officers of the Abraham Lincoln Association have just learned that several members of the Association have been solicited to purchase so-called Lincoln autographs which purport to come from one Brown, a colored man who is said to have been Mrs. Lincoln's coachman in the years immediately following Lincoln's death, and to have received the material now offered for sale from her.

This material consists almost entirely of sheet music, old maps and rare books, usually autographed "A. Lincoln". Many of the items are of considerable value in themselves.

We feel, however, that we should fail in our duty to our members, many of whom will undoubtedly be asked to make purchases from this collection, if we did not point out several circumstances surrounding this material and the sale of it. In the first place, it is strange that a body of material so important as this should have remained unknown until this late date. In the second place, it is not known to the officers of the Association that Lincoln was in the habit of collecting and autographing sheet music, maps and books. In the third place, several items from this collection have already been sold at prices much lower than the standard market value for genuine Lincoln autographs.

In the opinion of the officers of the Abraham Lincoln Association, members who may be offered items from this collection would do well to exercise more than ordinary precaution before purchasing, and to insist upon an effective guarantee that the purchase price will be refunded if the alleged Lincoln autographs should be proved to be forgeries.

Very truly yours,

*Paul M. Angle*  
Executive Secretary.



PRESIDENT'S WAR ORDER,  
No. 3.

EXECUTIVE MANSION,  
Washington, March 11, 1862.

Major General McClellan having personally taken the field at the head of the Army of the Potomac until otherwise ordered, he is relieved from the command of the other military departments, he retaining command of the Department of the Potomac.

Ordered, further, That the two departments now under the respective commands of General Halleck and Hunter, together with so much of that under General Buell as lies west of a north and south line indefinitely drawn through Knoxville, Tennessee, be consolidated and designated the Department of the Mississippi, and that, until otherwise ordered, Major General Halleck have command of said department.

Ordered, also, That the country west of the Department of the Potomac and east of the Department of the Mississippi, be a Military Department, to be called the Mountain Department, and that the same be commanded by Major General Fremont.

That all the Commanders of Departments, after the receipt of this order by them respectively, report severally and directly to the Secretary of War, and that prompt, full, and frequent reports will be expected of all and each of them.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR:

L. THOMAS,  
Adjutant General.

OFFICIAL:

Assistant Adjutant General.

Abraham Lincoln

*This was in the collection  
of old papers, pamphlets  
etc given to her ex-husband  
John R. Brown by Mrs. Lincoln  
in 1866*

*Yours, &c.  
The signature is genuine  
Frank E. Thatcher*

Notary Public, Washtenaw County, Mich.  
My commission expires Aug. 13, 1933

Original in possession of Thomas S. Brown  
Gift of Mrs. Brown to Mrs. Lincoln  
AUG 11 1866  
Don't forget to file





1941

7092

MORRIS H. BRIGGS

RARE BOOKS

506 South Wabash Avenue

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

SPECIALIST: LINCOLNIANA  
WESTERN AMERICANA

TELEPHONE:  
WEBSTER 3366

Dec. 11, 1941.

Dear Mr. Barber:

My affairs are still tied up  
+ until the government red tape  
is unfolded I can not be as ambitious  
in book buying as I would desire.

I will let you know when the  
proper time comes + thank you for  
your card.

Bought a fine lot that evidently  
came from John Loomis sale. Included  
were some of your old letters written  
35 or 40 yrs. ago to Loomis or DeWitt  
Miller re Herndon broadsides, etc.

I had some Herndon broadsides  
at one time. Bought 7 old Mar  
Sweet + sold to a dealer. Love

in Chicago. They blossomed  
out later with Lirio's signature  
(forged) & affidavits of Lirio's  
negro coachman & a Mich. Judge  
as to their authenticity.

It's a curious world &  
I hope you succeed in dodging  
bombs in L.A. Better move  
back to Springfield. I bought  
in 1936 all the Gen. Grierson  
papers. Etc. & did very well  
with them. Came from his res-  
tore in Jacksonville.

Sincerely  
MWBuggs

THE LINCOLN NATIONAL LIFE  
INSURANCE COMPANY

GRAND RAPIDS OFFICE

TO Dr. Louis A. Warren  
Home Office

DATE April 13, 1948

SUBJECT Picture of Lincoln


Dear Doctor:

Last week while at the Hotel Book-Cadillac in Detroit the resident manager, Mr. W. J. Chittenden, took me up to his suite and showed me an old picture of Lincoln. Mrs. Lincoln gave this picture to her coachman in 1866. It is signed by the coachman and notary, and apparently is authentic.

I just thought it would be a nice gesture on your part if you wrote him, stating that you are interested in old pictures of Lincoln, and if he has no other place for it when he is through with it, he might give it to the Company.

With kindest personal regards and hope that things are going nicely with you, I am,

Very truly yours,

  
General Agent

A. G. Green/kw



Mr. A. G. Green  
Grand Rapids Office

April 14, 1948

My dear Mr. Green:

It was very kind of you indeed to call our attention to the Lincoln picture at Hotel Book-Cadillac in Detroit in possession of the manager, Mr. Chittenden.

The only difficulty is the thing is likely a forgery because there were hundreds of these affidavits signed by the coachman and notarized by a Michigan Notary which are well known to Lincoln students as the largest group of forgeries every put on the public. We have one or two here which we picked up for a dollar or two apiece.

However, there were scattered among the forgeries what were apparently a few originals so one could not make a coverall statement which would include Mr. Chittenden's item as one of the forgeries. It may have been an original.

This fact, however, does not make me less appreciative of your interest in calling it to our attention.

L.A. Warren:CM

Director

1951-21  
WESSEX E. J.

**Manual of Arms**  
FOR LIGHT INFANTRY,  
ADAPTED TO THE  
**RIFLED MUSKET,**

WITH OR WITHOUT THE PRIMING ATTACHMENT.

ARRANGED FOR THE  
**U. S. ZOUAVE CADETS,**  
GOVERNOR'S GUARD OF ILLINOIS.

By COL. E. E. ELLSWORTH,

Colonel of the New York Fire Zouaves,  
and Paymaster General U. S. M.

CHICAGO:

P. T. SHERLOCK, 112 DEARBORN STREET.

1861.

See Number 108

The Coachman Brown Forgeries.

Many a Lincolnian found his way to the humble residence of one William P. Brown, at Muskegon, Michigan, in the late 1920s and early '30s; for it was known that he had served, for a short while, as coachman to Mrs. Lincoln. And...rumor had it...in his possession were numerous relics which had been given him by the martyred President's wife. Alas! Neither the small clutter of books, or a few broken dishes, bore any marks of authentication. Eventually word of this reached the ears of a gifted Chicago penman, who shall remain nameless despite the fact that we are advised that he has long since gone to the niche in Hell reserved for such as he.

The Chicagoan lost no time in visiting the old man, and buying all of his books; then, taking the old man and his wife to a neighboring drug-gist who happened to be a notary, he started his skullduggery. In a convenient blank spot towards the center of each book he had the old man and his wife sign their names. Below appeared the notarization reading: "From the Lincoln collection of Wm. P. Brown coachman for Mrs. Lincoln. the signatures are genuine." Signed Frank E. Thatcher, Notary of Public. Returning to Chicago with his plunder he proceeded to forge the signature of Abraham Lincoln in the front part of the book...and, a creditable job it was.

The first lot sold quickly, and returning to Muskegon he induced Brown to sign others which were supposed to have been overlooked. Returning with the third lot Brown refused to sign more books. But, our skillful penman was worried not at all. Forging the name of Lincoln in other books, he gave them a note of authenticity by forging the name of Eugene Field, and other notables in the same books. Thus these forgeries fall into two states. We present an example of each:



116. (Forgery) Colton's Map of the United States, The Canadas, etc. folded in-  
to cloth case the hinge of which is broken, New York, 1851 \$12.50  
Inscribed on first fold of map "A. Lincoln." On an interior  
fold: "W. P. Brown," "Emma Brown" From the Lincoln collection  
of Wm. P. Brown coachman for Mrs. Lincoln. The Signatures are  
genuine. Frank E. Thatcher. Notary Public Muskegon County, Mich.  
My commission expires Aug. 13, 1933.
117. (FORGERIES) Colton's Map of Kentucky and Tennessee, folded into cloth case  
New York, 1863 \$8.50  
Inscribed on first fold "A. Lincoln," and, above, "Eugene Field";  
on the third fold: "Truly yours Mark Twain."  
In each of the above cases the forgeries are excellent examples of  
the work of a smart operator.
118. FORRESTER, IZOLA. This One Mad Act. The unknown Story of John Wilkes  
Booth and his Family.  $8\frac{1}{2}$  by  $6\frac{1}{8}$  in, 500p, cloth, d. w., Boston, 1937 \$2.00
119. (Francis, Earl Elliott. The First Lincoln (Extra) following his Inaugura-  
tion published by the ADVERTISER, Chillicothe, Ohio, Tuesday, Mar. 5, 1861. f  
 $6\frac{3}{8}$  by  $4\frac{3}{8}$  in, 6 leaves and end-papers, printed wrappers, Chillicothe, Ohio  
March 13, 1946 \$1.00  
A schoolboy's production, reprinting an article from SCIOTA  
GAZETTE, with additional material. But one hundred copies were  
printed.
120. FRENCH, CHARLES WALLACE. Abraham Lincoln, the Liberator.  $7\frac{1}{4}$  by  $4\frac{3}{4}$  in, 398p  
cloth, New York, 1891 M 1083 \$2.00
121. GEMS FROM ABRAHAM LINCOLN.  $8\frac{5}{8}$  by  $6\frac{1}{4}$  in, 32p, wrappers, New York (1865)  
M 598 Ex-library copy \$3.00
122. GERRY, MARGARITA SPALDING The Toy Shop. A Romantic Story of Lincoln the  
Man.  $6\frac{3}{4}$  by  $4\frac{1}{2}$  in, 51p, cloth, New York \$1.00
123. GORDY, WILBUR F. Abraham Lincoln.  $7\frac{1}{4}$  by  $5\frac{1}{4}$  in, 266p, cloth, d. w. Chicago  
(1917) \$1.50
- X 124. GORMAN, REV. SAMUEL. Abraham Lincoln \* \* \* sermon delivered April 16,  
1865 9 by  $5\frac{3}{4}$  in, 22p, wrappers, New York, 1865 \$3.00
125. Caption: GRAND LINCOLN & JOHNSON RATIFICATION MEETING, etc. 9 by  $5\frac{3}{4}$  in,  
22p, sewed, np (1864) \$5.00  
M 298... $\frac{1}{2}$  inch taller than the copy described therein See illus-  
tration on opposite page
126. GRAY, WILLIAM C. LIFE OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN  $6\frac{3}{4}$  by  $4\frac{1}{4}$  in, 192p, cloth, Cin-  
cinnati, 1867 \$5.00  
M 880. Binding worn as usual and slightly water-stained; hence  
our low price on this very scarce juvenile.
127. GROSS, ANTHONY. Lincoln's Own Stories.  $7\frac{3}{4}$  by  $5\frac{1}{8}$  in, 223 (1)p, cloth  
New York, 1912 M 2024 \$1.50
128. HALL, REV. NEWMAN. A Sermon on the Assassination of Abraham Lincoln \* \*  
May 14, 1865  $9\frac{1}{2}$  by  $5\frac{3}{4}$  in, 16p, wrappers, Boston, 1865 M 538 \$3.00
129. HAMLIN, CHARLES EUGENE. The Life and Times of Hannibal Hamlin by his  
Grandson.  $9\frac{1}{2}$  by 6 inches, 627p,  $\frac{5}{4}$  morocco, Cambridge (Mass) 1899 \$5.00  
Lincoln Annex Fine copy





# ILLINOIS STATE HISTORICAL LIBRARY

Old State Capitol • Springfield 62706 • 217-782-4836

April 22, 1976

Mr. Samuel Morrill  
Edward Morrill & Son, Inc.  
25 Kingston Street  
Boston, Massachusetts 02111

Dear Mr. Morrill:

The book arrived today. I have come to the conclusion that the signature is good. I have compared the signature with photostats of over a hundred known forgeries we have. As you know "Sickles" and "Cosey" who produced most of the Lincoln forgeries were in some cases very good when they signed A. Lincoln only, but slipped up when they tried to produce a whole letter or document. You probably also know that most of the doubtful signed books, maps, and pictures came from the William P. Brown collection. He was supposed to have been Mrs. Lincoln's coachman and she is supposed to have given him all these items. We have a list of 118 of these items which have all been judged forgeries. Your book is not on that list.

I assumed that Lincoln might have received this book in 1861 from Charles Lanman and wrote his name in it at that time. As you may know, Lincoln wrote Lanman a letter June 9, 1860, thanking him for sending one of his books, probably Lanman's Dictionary of the United States Congress. Having been thanked by Lincoln for sending a book, it would seem logical that Lanman would send the President any new work he was involved in. Having assumed that Lincoln signed the book in 1861, I compared the signature with that on the copies we have of all Lincoln's known 1861 signatures. I found there was great variation in them--some were hurried, some were almost scribbled. One thing did stand out--that is prior to this time Lincoln had always been very careful to put two dots after the A., but in 1861 he seems to have rarely done this. On the other hand forgers have almost always been very careful to put the two dots, so much so that it sometimes makes their signatures a little awkward.

Naturally much of this is based on assumption and some may disagree with it. Frankly in the last 25 years I have generally relied on how such an item looked to me on first sight and have found my first impression was most always right.

STATE HISTORIAN: William K. Alderfer

TRUSTEES: James E. Myers, Chairman, *Springfield*; Leslie Orear, *Chicago*; Clyde C. Walton, *DeKalb*

Mr. Samuel Morrill

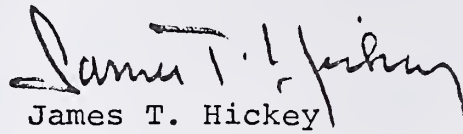
-2-

April 22, 1976

I hope the above will be helpful to you.

The book is being returned today.

Sincerely,

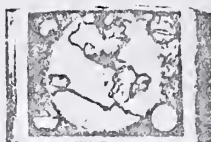
A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "James T. Hickey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a stylized "H".

James T. Hickey  
Curator, Lincoln Collection

JTH/hm

108. [CIVIL WAR]. THE CHURCH PULPIT IN SUPPORT OF THE STATE. The following pamphlets:
- a. BARROWS, WILLIAM. The war and slavery: and their relations to each other. A discourse, delivered in the Old South Church, Reading, Mass... Boston, 1863. 18p.
  - b. BARTOL, C.A. The duty of the time: a discourse... Boston, 1861. 16p.
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_. The recompense: a sermon... Boston, 1862. (24pp.)
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_. Our sacrifices: a sermon... after the funeral of Lieut. William Lowell Putnam. Boston, 1861. 23p.
  - e. CLARK, FREDERICK G. Thankfulness: its occasions and responsibilities. A sermon, preached... New-York,... by the pastor,... N.Y., 1861. 27p.
  - f. DICKINSON, N.S. Slavery: the nation's crime and danger. A sermon, preached in the Congregational Church, Foxborough, Mass. Spet. 30, 1860. Boston, 1860. 40p.
  - g. EDGAR, CORNELIUS H. The curse of Canaan rightly interpreted, and kindred topics. Three lectures, delivered in the Reformed Dutch Church, Easton, Pa., January and February, 1862. N.Y., 1862. 48p.
  - h. HALL, NEWMAN. A sermon on the assassination of Abraham Lincoln... Boston, 1865. 16p.
  - i. HEDGE, F.H. The sick woman. A sermon... Boston, 1863. 16p.
  - j. LEAVITT, W.S. A sermon... after the capture of Richmond, by... Hudson, 1865. 18p.
  - k. LEEDS, S.P. God's work of preparation: a sermon... Hanover, N.H., 1862. 14,2p.
  - l. PARKER, HENRY W. The despised race. A discourse... New Bedford, 1863. 15p.
  - m. QUINT, ALONZO H. A sermon delivered before the... government of Massachusetts, at the annual election,... Boston, 1866. 64p.
  - n. SANFORD, D. "God our refuge in trouble." A sermon preached August 24, 1862, at West Medway, in the church of Rev. Dr. Ide... Holliston, 1862. 15p.
  - o. STEARNS, EDWARD J. The sword of the Lord: a sermon, preached... Baltimore, 1861. 15p.
  - p. STEARNS, WM. A. Necessities of the war and the conditions of success in it. A sermon... Amherst, Mass... Sept. 26, 1861. Amherst, Ma., 1861. 15p.
  - q. STONE, A.L. Praise for victory. A sermon... Boston, 1862. 15p.
  - r. STONE, ANDREW L. A discourse occasioned by the death of Abraham Lincoln, ... preached in the Park Street Church, Boston... Boston, 1865. 21p.
  - s. \_\_\_\_\_. The wrok of New England in the future of our country. A sermon... at the annual election... Boston, 1865. 48p.
  - t. THOMPSON, A.C. Military success from God. A sermon... Boston, 1862. 23p.
  - u. VINTON, ALEXANDER H. God in government. A sermon preached on the day of the national fast, January 4, 1861, in the Church of the Holy Trinity, Philadelphia. Phila., 1861. 24p.
  - v. \_\_\_\_\_. Man's rule and Christ's reign. A sermon... N.Y., 1862. 26p.
  - w. \_\_\_\_\_. Thanksgiving Sermon. By... November 29, 1860. Published by request. Phila., Protestant Episcopal Book Soc., 1860. 23p.





WESTERN HEMISPHERE INC.  
*Books and Manuscripts*

EUGENE L. SCHWAAB

LITERARY HERITAGE  
AEROPHILIA

July 1, 1976

Lincoln National Life Foundation  
1301 South Harrison Street  
Fort Wayne, IND. 46801

Dear Mr. Neely:

Thank you for your kind letter of June 28th. I am pleased to forward a listing of the contents of item #108 in our Cat. 55 (this item is available and we will reserve it pending your decision); together with Mr. Hickey's letter (to Sam Morrill) regarding the Bohn Handbook with the Lincoln signature.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,

Robert H. Rubin  
RHR/jeo

JANE B. MIRKO  
4906 POWELL ROAD  
FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA 22032  
703-978-7213

March 2, 1993

The Lincoln Museum  
1300 South Clinton Street  
Post Office Box 1110  
Ft. Wayne, Indiana 46801

Dear Historians,

I am a student at the Northern Virginia Community College in Annandale, Virginia researching the White House staff during President Lincoln's years.

One person I have located in my search is William P. Brown. He has been mentioned in one or two biographies as Mrs. Lincoln's coachman. I also have a page from "Main Street Fine Books and Manuscripts" catalog where he is described from Charles Hamilton's book Great Forgers and Famous Fakes as "a ninety-three-year-old-black-man living in Ravenna, Michigan." Mr. Brown's signature was used in one of the Harry D. Sickles and Eugene Field forgeries. I have enclosed a copy of the page for you.

If there is any reference to Mr. Brown in your library, or perhaps he is referred to in Governor Horner's papers under the file of servants, that information would be invaluable in my research. Anything you could provide would be appreciated.

Thank you for your help in this, if there is a charge for copying or any other costs involved, please let me know.

Sincerely,

*Jane Mirko*

Jane Mirko

Enclosure

~~2/1/93~~ 5/14/93  
sent photocopies of all articles  
on forger Wm. Brown.  
R. C.

on the Riggs National Bank, Washington, D.C., payable to her mother, Jessie Lincoln Rauldolph (formerly Beckwith), 1936 June 15. Fine. Blue circular bank stamp in center, touching a portion of the signature, which is slightly smudged. Endorsed on verso by Randolph. Unusual pairing of uncommon Lincoln-related signatures. \$90.00

272. (---). Beckwith, Robert Todd Lincoln (1904-85). President Lincoln's great-grandson, the last direct Lincoln descendant. ALS "*Bobo*," 2pp, 6" X 9½", Hartfield, VA, 1944 March 8. Addressed to "*Cleo darlin*". Fine. Excellent personal content in which Beckwith muses on the past and time:

*One can dream and live in the past and I have had myself a wonderful time painting a picture of venture with life which has added so much to our happiness.*

*The intimate and generous past is doing its mighty best to bolster up the lean present of our declining years.*

*The toll of time has slowed down our physical being but that mighty stabilizer of spirit and mind keeps the grand old ship sailing along, close hauled and pointing high under full sail....*

Scarce and most unusual. Comes with 5" X 7" photograph of Beckwith in old age neatly mounted to a blank sheet of his personal stationery. \$175.00

273. (---). Brown, William P. Known as "Mrs. Lincoln's coachman." Lincoln forgery by the notorious Harry D. Sickles and the even more notorious Eugene Field II, son of the poet. Charles Hamilton best describes their hoax in *Great Forgers and Famous Fakes*:

*Sometime in 1930 or 1931, Eugene Field II apparently formed a partnership in the manufacture of Lincoln-signed books, pamphlets, sheet music and maps with Harry D. Sickles, a Chicago forger then living at the Congress Hotel. Sickles was not as skilled as Field, but his items had an equally good provenance. They purportedly came from Mrs. Lincoln's coachman, William P. Brown, a ninety-three-year-old black man living in Ravenna, Michigan. There was a notarized statement by Brown in each book or pamphlet swearing under oath that Mrs. Lincoln had presented it to him. Probably after the amnesiac nonagenarian had placed his shaky signature in the items, Sickles or Field had added Lincoln's signature. When queried later, Brown could not remember whether there was a Lincoln signature in each of the books and pamphlets when he sold them. . . .*

*Meanwhile, several victims who had become suspicious asked Judge Henry Horner of the Probate Court in Chicago to get an opinion from the renowned handwriting firm of Osborn, Osborn and Osborn in New York. Osborn proclaimed the Lincoln signatures by Field and Sickles to be forgeries....*

*...For nearly fourteen years the collection of forged inscriptions and signatures of Lincoln vanished from the autograph market, with only one or two now and then surfacing. But on April 14, 1945, the eightieth anniversary of Lincoln's murder, a Chicago attorney... mailed to nineteen collectors a mimeographed list of signed Lincoln items which he was offering for sale on behalf of an unidentified client...*

*...Informed by the Abraham Lincoln Bookshop that every item was suspect, [the attorney] at once withdrew the collection for sale....*

*The books and other spurious items have again disappeared and I have not been able to locate them.*

Well, we have, and offer here one of the Field-Sickles forgeries: Printed pamphlet, *Defence of the National Democracy Against the Attack of Judge Douglas.... Speech of Hon. J.P. Benjamin, of Louisiana*, Delivered in the Senate of the United States, May 22, 1860. Printed by Lemuel Towers. 24pp, 6" X 9½", self-cover. Good. Binding traces along left edge; chipping and small tears on edges of first and last page. Along the outer margin of the second page is written, "*This, from the collection of A Lincoln, was presented to her coachman, W. P. Brown, by Mrs. Lincoln. The signature is genuine. Frank E Thatcher.*" Notary blind-and ink-stamped. Across the bottom of the last page appears the same notarization and, at the top of the page, the signature "*A. Lincoln*," intentionally faded to give it an aged appearance. A ¼" piece is missing here, affecting the "*ohn*" in the forged signature. Brown's signature appears alongside each notarization; so too does that of Emma Brown (presumably his wife), which is not present in many of these forgeries. A nice copy of an uncommon pamphlet and, with the infamous Field-Sickles additions, a fine sample of one of the most celebrated Lincoln hoaxes. \$325.00

274. (---). Helm, Ben Hardin, Jr. (?-?). Lincoln's nephew, son of the president's Confederate brother-in-law. ALS, 2pp, 5" X 6½", Lexington, KY, 1933 Sept. 28. Addressed to Cousin Mary -- probably Mary Harlan Lincoln (1847-1937), Robert Todd Lincoln's wife. Fine. Hard times in the tobacco business:



WILLIAM P. BROWN

Brown may have served for a short time as a coachman to Mary Todd Lincoln in Washington. He later moved to Michigan and word soon got around that he possessed a number of relics given him by Mrs. Lincoln in 1866. A Chicagoan, Harry D. Sickels, visited Mr. Brown and bought the books and maps. He convinced Mr. and Mrs. Brown to have a notarized statement placed in the items. Upon returning to Chicago, he forged the signature of A. Lincoln above the statement, "From the Lincoln Collection Wm. P. Brown coachman for Mrs. Lincoln. The signatures are genuine."

*no date or source*

## Sickles - Brown Autographs

Grand Rapids, Michigan Oct. 4, 1929

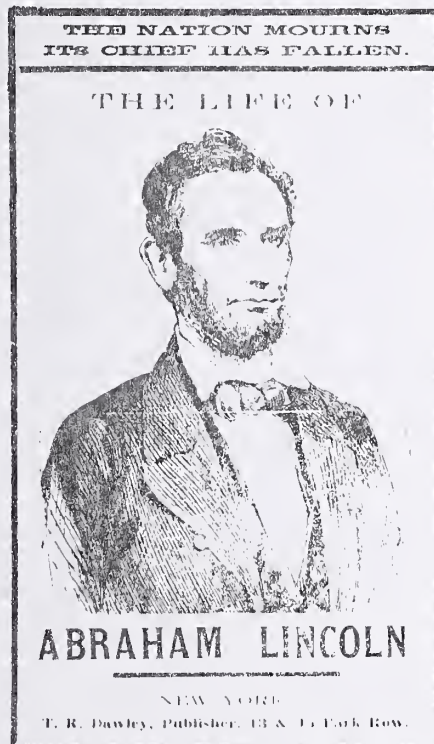
Stacy, about Brown the Cashman  
said to have worked for him &  
immediately after closing year.

Stacy copied in Parsons index times  
for Friday May 1 1931 and  
all about visit of Harry D. Sickles  
of Chicago to Parsons.

visit of the State Philanthropist and  
Brown "Brown" for years and  
before Brown's departure.

Sickles returns to Parsons a few  
months in the Parsons Times of  
May 2, 1931 which claims Brown  
was Cashman for him in the  
Springfield in 1931.

# Midland notes



We Offer. An unusual piece of Lincolniana.  
Miniature tintype of Abraham Lincoln, front view,  
size  $\frac{3}{4} \times 1 \frac{1}{8}$ , enclosed in a gold oval frame,  
which is in turn mounted on a contemporary photog-  
raphers card. The card is printed on the back as  
follows. "Made with Wing's patent multiplying camera,  
only at Geo. W. Godfrey & Co. Sunbeam Gallery".  
The whole enclosed in a modern frame, under glass,  
with the back of the frame left open. Has the sig-  
nature of Abraham Lincoln on the upper right hand  
corner of the card. The following is written in  
longhand on the back of the card. "This is from  
the Lincoln Collection given to her coachman Wm.  
P. Brown in 1866 by Mrs. Lincoln. Wm. P. Brown in 1931  
is a resident of Ravenna, Michigan. (Brown has signed  
under this) The signature is Genuine. (Signed)  
Frank E. Thatcher, Notary Public, Muskegon County,  
Michigan, (Notary seal stamped) \$50.00

Frank E. Thatcher





