Manuscripts: Various titles

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Abraham's Poetical Genius

Every where the poet is unconscious being a poet till after he
his organ.

In all hearts the poetic inspiration purges, but not all unlettered endeavor to voice the rhythmic sounds that are music to their days.

To my inquiry, "Did Abraham Lincoln write poetry?" The answers were always affirmative. "Oh yes," answered Mrs. Huff. He wrote on any and everything. But I doubt if his funniest will ever be published. These were called "The Chronicles." Two of the Peggyby boys married their mother gave a big house supper for them. Abe was not invited; but after hearing mother & the neighbors talk it all over, he wrote a lot of rhymes about the people & the entire affair. These he called "The Chronicles." They were passed from house to house because they were so funny. Of course they made sport of a number of persons & when these got hold of the paper it disappeared." Capt. John Lamar finished the story thus, "Many years after the Chronicles had disappeared John Sweeney a carpenter & his son Tim were engaged to repair a house in the neighborhood. Soon after dinner Mr. Sweeney not hearing his son hammer, called out Tim, you young vagabond, go to work." Receiving no response from Tim, Mr. Sweeney
got down from his ladder & went in search of his son. Seated on the doorstep was Jim, & in his hands were papers yellow with dust age & exposure. Jim was as interested in deciphering the words that he paid no heed to his father's footsteps. The father's curiosity was aroused & keeping over his son's shoulder he said, "Jim what have you here?" Jim's response came without a moment's hesitation or a move of my neck. "Sure, father, I think it is a part of the Bible that has never been translated." The sun set in the west before the workmen lifted a hammer, and Mr. Sweeney, when telling about the affair declared: "I would have listened to the rhyme if I ever built another house or earned another dollar." I traced These Chronicles through the neighborhood & found that Mr. Herndon had tried to purchase them from the gentleman into whose hands they had fallen. This only made me more anxious than ever to get hold of the wonderful papers. I sought Mr. Redmond Griggsby, brother-in-law of Sally Ann Lincoln Griggsby, & begged him to allow me to photograph the papers. He refused saying: "No, madame, they are
burned into ashes long ago. & all the hard feelings caused by them was burned with them. God, we were better off in world's good than the Lincolns and Abe, my oldest brother, Aaron Grigsby, married Abe's only sister, but that don't make me him and him & Roy pretend to be any kin to Abe. We all loved Sally for a better girl & a true woman never lived than Sally Ann Lincoln Grigsby. When I meet Abe in the next world I won't have the Chronicles between us.” If Mr. Redmond Grigsby was very difficult to interview, he always refused to talk about the Lincolns. He thinks reporters are: “Only just anxious to get what we folks have in our heads to give to the world to make fools of us.” And with a pointed question he looked at me & demanded “Aint that right? You know it is, for I read your answer in your face.” In every other subject he was loquacious but he would not allow any pencil notes, nor would he have his “picture took for any magazines.” He begged him to wave his former decisions aside in favor of one who had come as far to see & talk to him, but he was inexorable; he would not pose, so a “snap shot” was the only alternative. He gave me permission to make up any story you wish & say I said;—because when I look in your face I know you won't write lies, & I won't tell
any Lincoln stories. "Ask Joe," he came back to see him when he was making speeches for Henry Clay in 1844. You can ask him, I bet all about that for I'll not talk. You see I was only a little shaver when the Lincolns left Ind. But I remem-
bered them well, and when I heard that the Lincoln was going to make a speech at the old Carter Schoolhouse at the junction of the Dale & Buffaloville roads I just started.

But like all young men I was late getting there & I had to stop at the edge of the crowd, Pretty soon, in spite of the lively hand shaking up in front, he saw me and call-
ed, "Well, if there ain't Red. Grigsby I don't know anybody. We shook hands. He whispered to me, I'll go home with you. I staid & heard the speech through. Oh, yee I had changed. I was only about nine years old when the Lincolns left here for Ill. I helped yoke their oxen & went halfway to Gentryville with them." "You must ask Ken. Ietekh because he's the big gun of this district. He was editor of our Rockport paper when the spoke around here in 1844. He was one of the committee that nominated Abe for president. He can talk. I insist." So I was forced to take my leave—but I returned to get facts substan-
treated by this sturdy man. He treated me far morecordially on my second visit than on my first. He it was who told me where I would find the grave, where people lived in out of the way places & therefore I know his heart is altogether even if he would not talk about Lincoln.