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~~The Hidden Lincoln~~

Jan. 31-1938

Students of the life of Abraham Lincoln have long been troubled by the knowledge that ^{there} a large collection of source material ~~existed~~ existed said to contain facts on his ancestry and intimate life so damnable that no publisher dared to handle them. That zealous and devoted Lincoln collector, Mr. Emanuel Hertz, has now added to his many services to Lincoln research and interpretation a ~~book~~ volume ^{intimately concerned} ~~containing~~ made up of these documents unedited. He published them under the title of "The Hidden Lincoln."

Let it be said at once that no candid and intelligent reader of Lincoln literature is going to be ~~shock~~ seriously shocked even if he may be ^{occasionally} somewhat disgusted by what he finds in these documents, and more important there is nothing in them to shake in any degree the matured judgment of the world on Lincoln's worth. ~~The documents are~~

The documents in question come from the man who unquestionably was best placed to gather ~~the~~ material on the intimate life of Abraham Lincoln from the time he came into Illinois until he left for Washington, ~~This man was~~ William H. Herndon who for twenty ~~six~~ ^{one} years was Lincoln's law partner in ~~Illinois~~ Springfield. ^{see} Herndon ~~had~~ not only had an unusual intimate association with Lincoln but he knew all his neighbors and friends both in the New Salem and Springfield. He knew the men with whom he had practised law on the Circuit.

~~He began his collection in New Salem, Ill.~~
L. H. Allen

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Most important he knew Lincoln's political ambitions and from the start he had backed him to the full, and he had done this in spite of the fact that he himself was ~~a radical~~ ^{(indeed) an outspoken radical} abolitionist. The active and loyal support he gave Lincoln as he slowly ~~marked his way~~ and silently worked his way towards what he considered a constitutional and practical method of putting an end to the extension of slavery was based on Herndon's belief in Lincoln's honesty of purpose. He ~~seems to have believed~~ ^{unedited} always fully in Lincoln. Again and again in these/letters which Mr. Hertz now publishes we find Herndon re-iterating that ~~just~~ Lincoln "loved the right, the good and true with all his soul." He declares that his veracity was unbounded, his integrity unlimited. That take him all in all he was as "perfect as man as God generally makes." (Page 83)

~~But while Herndon throughout his life never failed to re-iterate~~

But there was another Lincoln, one that had always baffled Mr. Herndon. This was a cold, secretive, ambitious, a man who made up his own mind, never asked for other's opinions, kept his plans to himself, ^{my way} aside to the Lincoln character, ^a so opposite to the open, talkative, enthusiastic, radical Herndon ~~who always~~ ^{the} whose opinions were ~~intuitive~~ ^{sure} needed no long wrestling with facts, long efforts to find practical channels for applying them. This was ^a the hidden Lincoln ^{when} that at the outset of his quest started in 1865 immediately after Lincoln's death he determined to disclose and explain. ^{with the same} While from the start this

*that he never ceased to wonder about it
 "So you" to word & word "in said man
 if how and"*

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was the main purpose of his undertaking it did not prevent him^s gathering far and wide every item ~~on which he could put his hands.~~ concerning Lincoln on which he could put his hands. He wrote letters, travelled, spent time and strength and money he could ill-afford, to gather everything that men and women would give him, ~~concerning Lincoln's life.~~ We owe to this research the most

Mr. Hertz does not exaggerate when he says that this work of Herndon's has given to all Lincoln students that have followed him a mass of material which could be ~~hardly~~^{can} found nowhere else. That is, that every Lincoln student depends on Herndon. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Notably in this early gathering are the letters on which Lincoln's romance with Ann Rutledge is based, the letters which reveal one of the most curious courtships in all literature, Lincoln's almost comic courtship ~~with~~^{of} Mary Owens, episodes which, as Herndon rightly insists, ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ must not be over-looked ~~in any way~~ by honest students of the man's life.

But while so busily collecting materials of all kinds Herndon's mind was ~~settled~~^{persistent} more and more occupied with his explanation of Lincoln's/melancholy, and he soon had worked out ~~a~~^{fact-based} thesis which explained it to his satisfaction: Lincoln's ~~mother was an illegitimate child,~~^{am} this ~~he claimed~~^{he} ~~he claims he had from Lincoln himself.~~^{and} Starting from this point and without ~~giving any~~ of that careful and thorough research which certainly is ~~so important~~ the truth, on which he so insisted demanded, he built up largely by speculation a degrading story of ^{the} Lincoln's and Hanks family, ~~in the days before~~

was the main purpose of his undertaking it did not prevent him gathering far and wide every item on which he could put his hands. He wrote letters, travelled, spent time and strength and money he could ill-afford to gather everything that man and woman would give him concerning Lincoln's life. We owe to this research the most Mr. Harts does not exaggerate when he says that this work of Herndon has given to all Lincoln students that have followed him a mass of material which could be found nowhere else. That is, that every Lincoln student depends on Herndon.

He had but then only one woman who had kept him in romance; he had fallen into a period of misery; the dead water are upon his boat, he had made an unhappy marriage.

Under claim that Lincoln had been that his mind was averse to the study of all his explanation of Lincoln's melancholy, and he soon out a thesis which explained it to his satisfaction. Lincoln's mother was an illegitimate child. This was the point he claims he had from Lincoln himself. Starting from this point and without giving any of that careful and thorough research which certainly is so important the truth on which he so insisted demanded he built up largely by speculation a beguiling story of Lincoln's and Bank's family.

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Lincoln

Not only was ~~his~~ mother illegitimate but she was, ~~he~~ declared, a loose woman; Abraham Lincoln was born out of wedlock; his father was not Thomas Lincoln, and as for Thomas Lincoln he was ~~a~~ ~~hopelessly~~ little better than a pioneer tramp. The picture he worked up of the life of the boy Lincoln was sordid and miserable in every particular.

Now there existed at that time, ~~wh~~ at more thorough students ~~later~~ discovered material which was open to William Herndon if in his passion for truth he had been willing to admit that truth must rest on more impregnable basis than ^a man's passion for it, which ~~showed~~ proved the legitimacy of Lincoln's birth, the decency of his father and mother, as well as that Tom Lincoln, himself, considering his time and his chances was a fairly honest and ~~honest~~ ^{industrious} citizen up to the time that the enemy of the pioneer, fever and ague, had broken his body and ~~his~~ spirit. ~~But Herndon's explanation was criticized, and bitterly~~

~~the more than Herndon's explanation was criticized, and bitterly~~ it was ~~criticized~~ ^{to} as it came ~~before~~ the public, the more insistent he was ~~it was necessary to explain Lincoln, and we even find him~~ declaring that the life of the Hanks and Lincolns was one of open ~~lechury~~ ^{lechury}. And when ~~two of his chief authorities on the period~~ Dennis Hanks one of his chief authorities on the period denied ~~Herndon's story he called him a liar.~~ ^{When the} ~~very respectable citizen John Hanks, a cousin of Lincoln's, he accused~~ him of covering up facts.

but the more bitter the criticism the more insistent he was to show them

It is not ~~tax~~ surprising that Mr. Herndon could not interest publishers in his theories, ^{unborn} based as they were on his ~~and unsubstantiated~~ sensational picture of Lincoln's early life. For a time all of his hard and important work seemed to go for naught; he was a poor man; he could not afford to keep a ~~quest~~ ^{quest} which the public would-be Lincoln refused to accept, and so when in 1869 a fellow/biographer, Colonel Ward Lamon, a fellow lawyer with Lincoln on the Circuit, ^{his} companions in his last days in the White House, offered to buy outright Herndon's Lincoln material he sold it to him for \$4,000.00, and signed a contract by which Lamon became "the sole owner and his possessor of ~~his~~ records and was ~~empowered~~ and authorized to ~~sell~~, ~~publish~~ ^{do} to what he wished with them." That is, four years after ~~tax~~ ^{Lincoln} Herndon undertook his/research he seems to have abandoned the idea of himself writing a life of Lincoln, ^{and} and it was not until some ten years later that he ~~returned~~ ^{he} again took up the ~~quest~~ ^{quest}. He was stirred to this by the insistence of a young correspondent, one Jesse W. Weik. Weik sought autographs of Lincoln, also material for two articles which he was writing - Lincoln as a lawyer - Lincoln as a politician. Herndon who was always generous to students of Lincoln's life ~~now~~ ^{had} allowed himself to be freely interviewed, and these letters ^{show} that ~~perhaps~~ the most important material that we have on Lincoln's habit^s as a lawyer came out ~~in~~ through Jesse Weik's interview. He drew out from Herndon ~~answers~~ ^{by} insistent questioning of Lincoln's office habits, the accounts of the books he read, stories of law suits and a political ^{maneuvers}. That is, Weik by

from Herndon

~~interview~~ obtained a big grist of Lincoln material in the same way that Herndon had obtained it from others in his first years of interest in the subject. ~~It~~ One of the subjects on which Weik repeatedly ^{quoted} ~~attacked~~ Herndon was Mary Lincoln. Again and again Herndon pictures her in his answers to ~~Herndon~~ as a "female wildcat," a woman who made Lincoln's domestic life a hell on earth. Here again it was necessary for ~~Lincoln~~ Herndon's theory of Lincoln's melancholy to make out Mary Lincoln a ~~type~~ ^{very one} of the most violent and unrelieved type. There is no doubt that Mary Lincoln was a hysterical and difficult person at times, there is also no doubt that she loved Abraham Lincoln and according to her own settled convictions of what was good for him and his ambitions devoted herself to his interest. Nobody can deny that she was hard to live with, and nobody should deny that Abraham Lincoln with his different social ideas, his everyday habits was hard for Mary Lincoln to live with. But ~~all~~ the more we know of the life of the two together, the more kindly ^{one} ~~and a candid mind~~ must feel towards the woman. But Mr. Herndon had no trace of kindness in the picture he drew of her for Mr. Weik. He needed ~~her~~ ^{his} picture of her for his ~~explanation~~ of his thesis.

The correspondence went on until both men realized that these letters of Herndon's and the material that Weik was gathering in other quarters was far too ^{val} ~~valuable~~ ^{luminous} and valuable for mere articles. They agreed that they had a book, and ~~in~~ soon Herndon was giving the bulk of his time to answering Weik's questions and to flooding him with ~~his~~ ~~essays~~ philosophical dissertations on Lincoln's nature. As he says he knew that Weik did not like this kind of thing, but he himself valued it highly and he wanted to get as much as possible in the book.

Together they worked on the volume until finally in 1889 it was published, an invaluable book for the Lincoln student ^{had} but ~~for~~ the general public revolted against it. ~~Herndon insisted~~ ^{over} that his theories of the Lincoln ancestry should go without further investigation. ^{How ever some men will also declaim the} In the Preface he declares that Lincoln came from a "stagnant putrid pool", which was more to the public by that time beginning to get some fairer estimate of the Lincoln and Hanks in Kentucky and Southwestern Indiana would accept, and certainly ^{it was reasonable} more than Robert Lincoln was willing to let pass without protest. ^{was} When the book appeared he was Ambassador to the Court fo. St. James and he did the foolish thing of angrily buying up ~~the edition~~ all copies he could put his hands on, of using all his influence to stop the circulation, a maneuver which only advertised the book. ^{It} Unhappily for Weik and particularly for Herndon who ~~needed~~ by this time was deperately poor ~~and needed some~~ ~~returns~~ and should have had some return for the great service he had rendered Lincoln research the book was a failure. ~~The letters published here show how~~

disappointment

It was a crowning ^{to} William Herndon and early in 1891 he died leaving all his papers, including copies of ^{what} these which he had sold to Lamon, ~~six of the six~~ ^{generous} to Weik. With this went a characteriscally note saying that he considered Weik the best equipped man of his day and generation as far as Lincoln was concerned and that he turned over to him all of the manuscripts and other material on Lincoln that he had been "steadily gathering since that memorable day of April 1865 when the bullet of Booth did the fatal work."

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True ^{Wendell} he had finally consented that my review account of the book I & H. family should be dropped or held in reserve. He had written criticized Holland & "criticisms" as he called them. Why in referring to myself in story but now that I see I am rather pitifully I would like to be a success?

over a
the ^{Wendell} ^{David}

It was a crowning to William Herndon and early in 1891 he died leaving all his papers, including copies of those which he had sold to Lamson. With this went a characteristically note saying that he considered Weik the best equipped man of his day and generation as far as Lincoln was concerned and that he turned over to him all of the manuscripts and other material on Lincoln that he had been "specially gathering since that memorable day of April 1865 when the bullet of Booth did the fatal work."

Mr. Weik made good use of the material. Senator Beveridge made still better use, but neither took the pains to explain away ~~the mystery hidden in their depths.~~ ^{that was declared to be concealed} Here were things that a woman should not see; here was the true secret of Lincoln's heredity, of his relations with women, of his unclean stories, but now the worst is out, and as said above no candid mind need be afraid to face it. It ~~will~~ ^{will} ~~really~~ ^{really} make little or no difference in the final estimate of Abraham Lincoln's life and character. The chief mystery has ^{as to this} Here is no revelation in regard to Lincoln's ancestry, only ~~the faintest glimpse of the~~ ^{the faintest glimpse of the} ~~entirely~~ ^{entirely} Herndon's full and unexpurgated picture of it, a picture ~~entirely~~ ^{practically} obliterated by later research.

As a ~~matter of fact~~ ^{matter of fact} this volume is of little importance ~~much less importance~~ ^{than so} not important of what it has to say of Abraham Lincoln as it is as a vivid, and rather fascinating example of the biographical methods of William Herndon, ^{and the trap} into which all biographers fall, when they set out with a theory and hold it more important than the facts needed to support it. On the whole ^{the} ~~this~~ is a greater contribution to the life of William Herndon than it is to that of Abraham Lincoln. It ~~proves~~ ^{shows} shows what has been shown before, particularly in Joseph Fort Newton's "Herndon and Lincoln" that a careful, reflective, candid life of this man should be written. This book would be an invaluable contribution to such a study, ^{and} and such a book would show on Lincoln's development and career ~~than Mr. Hertz~~ ^{than Mr. Hertz} ~~the~~ "The Hidden Lincoln."

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Perhaps the most important conclusion
to be drawn from "The Hidden Lincoln"
is that a biographer who holds a
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needed to support it ^{will} ~~is~~ sooner
^{or later} ~~to~~ fall sooner or later ^{to} ~~fall~~ into a
trap of his own making

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THE HIDDEN LINCOLN *

Students of the life of Abraham Lincoln have long been troubled by the knowledge that there existed a large collection of source material said to contain facts on his ancestry and intimate life so damnable that no publisher dared handle them. That zealous and devoted Lincoln collector, Mr. Emanuel Hertz, has now added to his many services to Lincoln research and interpretation a volume made up of these hitherto concealed documents. He publishes them unedited under the title of "The Hidden Lincoln."

Let it be said at once that no candid and intelligent reader of Lincoln literature is going to be seriously shocked even if he may be occasionally disgusted by what he finds in these documents, and more important there is nothing in them to shake in any degree the matured judgment of the world on Lincoln's worth.

The documents come from the man who unquestionably was best placed to gather material on the intimate life of Abraham Lincoln from the time he came into Illinois until he left for Washington, William H. Herndon for twenty one years Lincoln's law partner in Springfield, Illinois. He not only had an

* From the Letters and Papers of William H. Herndon
Emanuel Hertz
New York: The Viking Press, 1938

unusual intimate association with Lincoln but he knew all his neighbors and friends in New Salem and Springfield. He knew the men with whom he had practised law on the Circuit. Most important he knew Lincoln's political ambitions and from the start he had backed him to the full, and he had done this in spite of the fact that he himself was an outspoken, indeed rather noisy, abolitionist. The active and loyal support he gave Lincoln as he slowly and silently worked his way towards what he considered a constitutional and practical method of putting an end to the extension of slavery was based on Herndon's belief in Lincoln's honesty of purpose. Again and again in these unedited letters we find Herndon re-iterating that Lincoln "loved the right, the good and true with all his soul." He declares that his veracity was unbounded, his integrity unlimited. That take him all in all he was as "perfect a man as God generally makes."

But there was another Lincoln, one that had always baffled Mr. Herndon. This was a cold, secretive, ambitious man who never asked for other's opinions, kept his plans to himself, made up his own mind, a character so opposite to the open, talkative, enthusiastic, radical Herndon whose opinions needed no long wrestling with facts, long efforts to find practical channels for applying them that he had never ceased to wonder about it. Lincoln was "so good and so odd" he said once and at the outset of his quest started in 1865 immediately after Lincoln's death he determined to disclose and explain this hidden Lincoln.

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While from the start this was the main purpose of his undertaking it did not prevent his gathering far and wide every item concerning Lincoln on which he could put his hands. He wrote letters, travelled, spent time and strength and money he could ill afford, to gather everything that men and women would give him.

Mr. Hertz does not exaggerate when he says that this work of Herndon's has given to all Lincoln students a mass of material which can be found nowhere else. Notably in this early gathering are the letters on which Lincoln's romance with Ann Rutledge is based, the letters which reveal one of the most curious courtships in all literature, Lincoln's almost comic courtship of Mary Owens, episodes which, as Herndon rightly insists, must not be over-looked by students of the man's life.

But while so busily collecting materials of all kinds Herndon's mind was more and more occupied with his explanation of Lincoln's persistent melancholy, and he soon had worked out a five-sided thesis which explained it to his satisfaction:-

Lincoln's mother was an illegitimate child; he had lost the only woman who had brought him romance; he had fallen into a period of insanity; he had written an infidel book; he had made an unhappy marriage.

Herndon claims that Lincoln had told him that his mother was ~~an~~ illegitimate, and starting from this point and without that careful and thorough research which certainly

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~~the~~ truth, on which he so insisted demanded, he built up largely by speculation a degrading story of the Lincoln and Hanks family.

Not only was Lincoln's mother illegitimate but she was a loose woman; Abraham Lincoln was born out of wedlock; his father was not Thomas Lincoln, and as for Thomas Lincoln he was little better than a pioneer tramp. The picture he worked up of the life of the boy Lincoln was sordid and miserable in every particular.

Now there existed at that time, what more thorough students later discovered, material which was open to William Herndon if in his passion for truth he had been willing to admit that truth must rest on more impregnable basis than a man's passion for it, which proved the legitimacy of Lincoln's birth, the decency of his father and mother, as well as that Thomas Lincoln, himself, considering his time and his chances was a fairly honest and industrious citizen up to the time that the enemy of the pioneer, fever and ague, had broken his body and spirit.

Herndon's explanation was bitterly criticized as it came to the public, but the more bitter the criticism the more insistent he was ^{his} on ~~the~~ theory. We even find him declaring that the life of the Hanks and Lincolns was one of "open lechery." And when Dennis Hanks one of his chief authorities on the period denied this Herndon called him a liar and when a very respectable citizen John Hanks, a cousin of Lincoln's denied it he accused him of covering up facts.

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It is not surprising that Mr. Herndon could not interest publishers in his sensational theories of Lincoln's early life, unproved as they were. For a time all of his hard and important work seemed to go for naught. He was a poor man; he could not afford to ^{continue} keep a quest which the public refused to accept, and so when in 1869 a fellow would-be Lincoln biographer, Colonel Ward Lamon, a fellow lawyer with Lincoln on the Circuit and his companion in his last days in the White House, offered to buy outright Herndon's Lincoln material he sold it to him for \$4,000.00, and signed a contract by which Lamon became "the sole owner and possessor of his records and was authorized to do what he wished with them."

That is, four years after Herndon undertook his Lincoln research he seems to have abandoned the idea of himself writing a life of Lincoln and it was not until some ten years later that he again took up the work. # He was stirred to this by the insistence of a correspondent, one Jesse W. Weik. Weik sought autographs of Lincoln, also material for two articles he was writing - Lincoln as a lawyer - Lincoln as a politician. Herndon who was always generous to students of Lincoln's life allowed himself to be freely interviewed, and his letters here published give the most important material that we have on Lincoln's habits as a lawyer. Weik drew out from Herndon/^{by}insistent questioning Lincoln's office habits, the accounts of the books he read, stories of law suits and political manoeuvres. That is, Weik obtained a big grist of Lincoln material from Herndon in the same way that Herndon had obtained it from others in his first years of interest in the subject.

quintessence One of the subjects on which Weik repeatedly quoted Herndon was Mary Lincoln. Again and again Herndon pictures her in his answers as a "female wildcat", a woman who made Lincoln's domestic life a hell on earth. Here again it was necessary for Herndon's theory of Lincoln's melancholy to make out Mary Lincoln a vixen of the most violent and unrelieved type. There is no doubt that Mary Lincoln was a hysterical and difficult person at times, there is also no doubt that she loved Abraham Lincoln and according to her own settled convictions of what was good for him and his ambitions devoted herself to his interests. Nobody can deny that she was hard to live with, and nobody should deny that Abraham Lincoln with his different social ideas, his everyday habits was hard for Mary Lincoln to live with. But the more we know of the life of the two together, the more kindly one feels towards the woman. But Mr. Herndon had no trace of kindness in the picture he drew of her for Mr. Weik. He needed his picture for his thesis.

The correspondence went on until both men realized that these letters of Herndon's and the material that Weik was gathering in other quarters was far too voluminous and valuable for mere articles. They agreed that they had a book, and soon Herndon was giving the bulk of his time to answering Weik's questions and to flooding him with philosophical dissertations on Lincoln's nature. As he says he knew that Weik did not like this kind of thing, but he himself valued it highly and he wanted to get as much as possible in the book.

Digital Images, 2011. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

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Together they worked on the volume until finally in 1889 it was published, an invaluable book for the Lincoln student but the general public revolted against it.

True Herndon had finally consented that his sensational account of the Lincoln and Hanks family should be dropped as Weik insisted. ^{advised} He had bitterly criticized Holland and "the boys" as he called Nicolay and Hay for refusing to accept his story, but now he himself gave it up. As he said rather piteously, "I want the book to be a success."

In the Preface, however, he comes back with the declaration that Lincoln came from a "stagnant putrid pool" which the public by that time beginning to get some fairer estimate of the Lincolns and Hanks in Kentucky and Southwestern Indiana would not accept, and certainly it was something Robert Lincoln now Ambassador to the Court of St. James was unwilling to let pass without protest. He did the foolish thing of angrily buying up all copies he could put his hands on, of using all his influence to stop the circulation, a maneuver which only advertised the book.

Unhappily for Weik and particularly for Herndon who by this time was desperately poor and should have had some return for the great service he had rendered Lincoln Research the book was a failure.

It was a crowning disappointment to William Herndon and early in 1891 he died leaving to Weik all his papers, including copies of what he had sold to Lamson. With them went

a characteristically generous note saying that he considered Weik the best equipped man of his day and generation as far as Lincoln was concerned and that he turned over to him all of the manuscripts and other material on Lincoln that he had been "steadily gathering since that memorable day of April 1865 when the bullet of Booth did the fatal work."

Mr. Weik made good use of the material.

Senator Beveridge made still better use, but neither took the pains to explain away the mystery declared to be concealed in the papers. Here were things that "a woman should not see"; here was the true secret of Lincoln's heredity, of his relations with women, of his unclean stories. But now the worst is out, and as said above no candid mind familiar with the life of the world in which Lincoln was born and lived need be afraid to face it.

As to the revelation in regard to Lincoln's ancestry so long hidden we now have Herndon's full and unexpurgated story of it, a story undermined by later research. Perhaps the most important conclusion to be drawn from "The Hidden Lincoln" is that a biographer who holds a theory more important than the facts needed to support it will sooner or later fall into a trap of his own making.

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Herndon Letters - Book Review

The love of truth which Herndon reiterates again and again in these early letters concern themselves mainly with a large appetite for ^{clean}unseen details. The love of truth compelled him, he claimed, to tell all however smutty and gross it might be. He did not ^{value}value the importance of these things in his mental picture or the relation to other things. He insisted on making them heavy, prominent blotches. Another man would have ignored them because they offended his taste to put them down. The result was that of the two schools which Holland was perhaps the early representative of the second Herndon placed too much emphasis to unclean detail, the other too little.

The point throughout these letters you have Mr. Herndon's reiteration that he must tell the truth. He then no doubt believed to be the fact that first, Lincoln's grandmother was what he calls a half-way prostitute, his mother illegitimate.

See Page 52

It certainly was up to Herndon before he spread this fact, if it was a fact as he frequently later said when challenged to do his utmost to show by documents that the "truth" he felt so strongly his duty to reiterate was the truth, if there was documentary proof or not.

For a long time Herndon intimated that there was no proof of the marriage of Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks. They were in existence, all of the documents to prove the marriage. It is only an example of Herndon's hysterical and slip-sled method of collecting his material in a matter as important as this before he had something more than hearsay to go on.

strongly believing fact-

He had no sense of propriety in regard to the time when he should make his revelations of truth. The year after Mr. Lincoln's death he gave a lecture on Ann Rutledge - ^{in which} purely imaginary. He attempts ^{ed} to reproduce the romance in a sordid ~~lengthy~~ verbosity which borders on the absurd. ^{arms}

In my judgment he rendered a great service in collecting as promptly as he did the proofs of this romance. This giving his findings to the public while Mrs. Lincoln was still so near the great tragedy and suffering in so many ways, when the son was still suffering a humiliation of her condition, as well as the sorrow for their father's tragic death, ^{the} throwing into their problems this story certainly was not serving humanity. Gather the proofs - yes - but use them in their proper relation to other matters.

We owe ^{more} of course to Mr. Herndon's energetic pursuit ^{the} of women whom he courted before he married Mary Lincoln than to any other man. The letters from the family establishing the romance; the letters ~~to~~ Mary Owen - hers to him. It was an almost comic courtship as ~~the~~ biography reveals. These go to Mr. Herndon's credit.

All that ^{can} one claim is his making the time of his publication, the manner of it.

The life of Lincoln was by no means an un[?] field when Herndon began his work of collecting. By 1865 Henry Raymond (See cover) - in 1862 Holland. Both books contained valuable source material, unpublished letters, speeches and state documents, a grist of reminscences. But both were weak on the ^{material} which ^{to} Mr. Herndon was naturally enough all important. Herndon had been a fellow-townsmen of young Lincoln in ^{Salem} ^{Mass}, had been his law partner in Springfield. *Student.*

Herndon held the Springfield office while Lincoln travelled the circuit. How good a lawyer he was I do not know that it has ever been fairly estimated. That is one of the things that remains for some careful student to do.

Herndon, too, was interested in the Lincoln he knew, what had made him this melancholy, pondering, ^{serious} person. Herndon being what he was a man of emotions, with a passion for ^{words} ~~work~~, and ideas, was always bewildered by Lincoln's silence, that retiring into himself which was so characteristic. Herndon apparently never went into himself, in the sense that Lincoln did. He had to have an explanation; he was an amateur psychologist. It was the fact that there was a dark strain in his heredity, the fact that he had had a sordid childhood and little opportunity, the fact that he had loved a woman greatly and lost her, the fact that he had married a woman with whom there could be no glamour of romance and that she had tormented him by her notions of life as he no doubt ~~had~~ tormented her by his own notions. And it was to unfold these explanations

of the Lincoln who bewildered him and which Herndon and Raymond and the rest ~~men~~ knew little, apparently cared little)

(of this time)

He set out to gather material. He gathered, ^{if} and not altogether complete, a vital and interesting picture of the fourteen years that Lincoln spent in Southwestern Indiana to the time he was twenty one - his New Salem years. This body of material dove-tailed into what had already been done by such men as Raymond and Holland.

He estimated the value of this picture of this important & the necessity of this analysis of this phase of his life which the country as a political whole interested itself - his handling of the matter of the abolition of slavery -

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Herndon

A. 2. *

The truth like everything else is relative. Moreover, it is subject to of interpretation, reflects the character and understanding, experienced life of the man who attempts to tell the truth; the time and place has something to do with telling the truth. So has sympathy/^{for}whome a fact may affect; so has the relative value of fact, the thing we call taste and reticence. They have their part in all human actions.

Herndon was obsessed by the idea of a certain set as what he regarded as facts were of superior importance. Apparently the most important in his mind were the questions of the legitimacy of Lincoln's mother. He claimed that Lincoln told him that she was an illegitimate child, that her father was a virginia planter - this to explain Lincoln's superior intellect. if Lincoln himself had known more of the Lincoln genealogy they would ~~have~~ not have had to have gone to a virginia planter to explain his intellectual inheritance.

went past this -
back. 8/7

It was not the training of Lincoln's mind that ~~Herndon was so interested in.~~ ^{been} He had/profoundly and deeply moved by Lincoln's ~~vigilant~~ pondering, his moodiness, what Herndon called his secretiveness. He did not tell things, ~~He~~ It's always baffled and mystified Herndon that a man could keep ^{as little} his secret, could talk/as Lincoln did about intimate personal things, about ideas. This was a natural reaction to ~~the type of~~

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~~xxxxx~~ Herndon's type of mind. His was a more open, imaginative frequently over-heated, mind, generally heated, / excited about something and generally was a public matter. He was an ardent abolitionist. He did not keep his radicalism to himself, / His aspirations were expressed in fervid, often muggy words. His attack on problems was emotional. He took it out in verbosity. Mr. Lincoln pondered the problem, seeking to pound out solutions, and when he found what he thought was the answer he struggled hard to put it into clear language.

Herndon was always positive, sure; Lincoln halting, humble. The difference ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ in the two men in their presentation to the public of Illinois seemed to me pretty well shown in autographs they made for one of their young law students, in 1858 on the eve of the Great Debate, and afterwards it should be remembered Lincoln had made the speeches which set him as the leader of the Republican party in Illinois.

See Page 212 of "Footsteps"

Why was it that Lincoln ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ so slow in coming to his conclusions, so determined to be sure, he thought the thing was right before he said it, could tie up in the law partnership a man so different in temperment and mind? It may be that it was that very difference that attracted him. He was warm^{ed} and interested by a type of whom there were few enough in conservative, proper, Springfield. Mr. Herndon could never be one of the select upper set of Springfield. That select upper set could never warm Abraham Lincoln as he needed to be warmed.

on Ann Rutledge, strongly interpreted I believe ^{as} an attempt to smudge Mr. Lincoln's memory, he ~~wrote~~ repeated, "I repeat to you Mr. Arnold that I think ~~Mr~~ Lincoln was the best man, the kindest, the tenderest, the noblest, ^{the} ~~loveliest~~ since Christ. He was better and purer than Washington and in mind he stand incomparable, grandly looming up. He is now the great central figure of American history."

Again and again through these letters ^{where} Mr. Lincoln has evidently been challenged by letter, charged with belittling Mr. Lincoln, he repeats something of this kind. Now what was he doing that should so have disturbed ^{for} many years friends of Lincoln, a public devoted to his memory?

Herndon says that what he has done is in the ^{he} interest of truth, this ^{he} reiterates along with his repeated fervid, declarations of admiration for the man. It was the truth which he thought was being neglected and which was needed to understand Lincoln.

multi which

From what we have the supposition is that this was true, but the Hank genealogy has not been established and if any patriotic citizen ^{that can afford it who} wants to do a good service to the memory of Abraham Lincoln he cannot do better than to put skilled genealogists ~~on~~ the Hank problem, get it settled once for all.

Certainly Herndon did not settle it. He only raised it. True, he went to Kentucky, but he did not confirm there by any kind of documents. ~~There is no information from~~ It is interesting to note that from any investigations he made he never sought out the most substantial families in that part of the country. ~~He never sought out the most substantial families in that part of the country.~~ He always claimed that they were connected with Nancy Hanks and knew ~~of~~ all about her parentage. They offered no proof, anymore than Mr. Herndon did, ~~but~~ It is still unclear the relationships of these families - Shipleys, Mitchells, all of whom deny that Mr. Herndon had correctly understood Mr. Lincoln.

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It was not a thing to publish until you had proof.
Mr. Herndon had other points - the romance of Ann Rutledge.
For myself I believe we owe a great deal to Mr. Herndon.