

Bridgewater State University

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**Rev. Joseph L. McCorison Jr. Papers,
1937 – 1971 (bulk 1940s)
(Part of the Lincoln Group of Boston Collection)
(MSS-008.002)**

*Finding Aid Compiled by
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Volume: 7.25 linear feet (7 document boxes)

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Joseph L. McCorison Papers Biographical Sketch

Reverend Joseph Lyle McCorison Jr. was one of the original 19 charter members of the Lincoln Group of Boston who met for the first meeting in February 1938. He was a Midwesterner who completed graduate work at Harvard Divinity School and Andover Theological Seminary before becoming the President of South Dakota's Yankton College in 1940. He returned to Boston in 1944 to become Regional Director of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, and to work with many civic, religious, and educational groups.

McCorison dedicated much of his time to Lincoln scholarship. Of particular interest to him were the famous "Sleeping" Sentinel, Lincoln's association with Friend Delahay, and the Governors of the Dakota Territory. He wrote papers on a variety of Lincoln topics, along with publishing the only known Lincoln biography in a Native American language (Siouan). He made a critical study of a number of the painted portraits of Lincoln as well.

The presentations McCorison delivered to the Lincoln Group of Boston include: "The Portraits of Abraham Lincoln Painted by Albion Harris Bicknell," April 1945; "Finding an Unknown Lincoln by Healy," October 1945; "William Wallace Lincoln, 1850-1862," February 1962; "Pleasure and Profit in Lincolniana," April 1967; and "The Lincolns of Hingham," April 1968.

Scope and Content Note

The 7 box collection is comprised of McCorison's in-depth research on several different topics relating to Abraham Lincoln. The layout of the collection has largely been left in the original order McCorison had filed it. Some of his research falls into multiple boxes. In an effort to maintain original provenance the collection was not separated into series. The majority of folders do not have dates attached to them due to McCorison's research notes being left undated and the potential confusion it may cause potential researchers using the collection.

Box 1 contains numerous research topics of McCorison relating to Lincoln. Box 2 focuses on the William Scott Case. Box 3 contains research on the Artist Albion Harris Bicknell, as well as correspondence of McCorison to other Lincoln Group members, and many other Lincoln related subject areas. Box 4 contains research on Lincoln and his time in Massachusetts, research on Mark W. Delahay of Kansas, and “The Great Lincoln Collections and What Became of Them.” Box 5-7 contain research on Lincoln portraits and the artists that painted them, and research on the photographic history of Lincoln.

This McCorison Papers are part of the [Lincoln Group of Boston Collection](#). Related collections can be found within this larger collection that is composed of the papers of many past Lincoln scholars.

Box and Folder List

Box 1

Folder

1. Miscellany: notecards – research notes
2. Miscellany: “Lincoln and the Governorship of Dakota”
 - research and correspondence, 1942-1947
3. The Lincoln Funeral Sermons
 - research and correspondence, 1945-1949
4. Miscellany: newspaper articles about Lincoln
 - includes “The Great Lincoln Picture Mystery,” 1961-1962
5. Lincoln and – Ann Rutledge
6. Lincoln and – Herndon
7. Lincoln and – Joseph Medill
8. Lincoln and – Mary Owen
9. Lincoln and – Mary Todd
10. Lincoln and – Philately
11. Lincoln and – Robert E. Lee
12. Lincoln and – the Crawford episode
13. Lincoln and – the Methodists
 - Dr. Joseph Wright
14. Lincoln and – the South
15. Lincoln and – the war cabinet (1861-1865)
16. Lincoln and – William Schouler
17. Lincoln in – Decater, Illinois
18. Lincoln’s – administration
 - the first four months in 1861
19. Lincoln’s – descendants
20. Lincoln’s – house in Springfield, Illinois
21. Lincoln’s – Springfield
 - markers and monuments (includes a 1932 letter from the governor of Illinois, Louis Emmerson)
22. Lincoln – advertising

23. Lincoln – assassination
24. Lincoln – autographs
25. Lincoln – books about
26. Lincoln – campaign of 1860
27. Lincoln – Congressman
28. Lincoln – convention of 1860
29. Lincoln – diplomat
30. Lincoln – drama
31. Lincoln – his last day, 14 April, 1865
32. Lincoln – letters
33. Lincoln – liquor
34. Lincoln – literary style
35. Lincoln – new papers discovered
36. Lincoln – patent
37. Lincoln – portraits on glass
38. Lincoln – religion
39. Lincoln – Republican campaign of 1865
40. Lincoln – school days and school masters
41. Lincoln – speaker
42. Lincoln – statuary art
43. Lincoln – Lincoln Day address
44. Lincoln – “Lincoln didn’t say it”
45. Lincoln – Lincoln Memorial, Washington, D.C.
46. Lincoln – Lincoln parks in Illinois
47. Lincoln – parks in Indiana
48. Lincoln – Lincoln-Shields duel, 1842
49. Others – Buchanan, President James
50. Others – Nevins, Allen
 - The Emergence of Lincoln
51. Others – Nicolay, John G. (1832-1901)
52. Others – Sandburg, Carl
53. Others – Stern, Alfred Whital
 - collection of Lincolniana
54. Others – Tarbell, Ida
55. Others – Thoreau, Henry David
56. Others – Twain, Mark
57. Others – Washington, George
58. Others – Welles, Gideon
 - The Diary of Gideon Welles
59. Others – Whitman, Walt
60. Lincoln – A. Lincoln
 - “I Regret to Say”

Box 2**Folder**

(Entire box on: What is the truth concerning Lincoln's role in pardoning William Scott – "The Sleeping Sentinel")

1. Participants – McClellan, George B.
 - miscellaneous notes about McClellan
 - comments on the "Sleeping Sentinel Pardoning"
2. Participants – Herrick, Henry
 - "Sleeping Sentinel" pardon
3. Participants – Parmalee, Moses M.
 - "Sleeping Sentinel" pardon
4. Participants – Ridenour, Major
 - "Sleeping Sentinel" pardon
5. Participants – Scott, William
 - details on family, court-martial, pardon
6. Participants – Scott, William
 - photographs
7. Participants – McCarthy, Timothy
 - cf. with Scott
8. Participants – Smith, William F.
 - Vermont general and his account of the William Scott case
 - original photograph of Smith removed and added to another collection
9. Participants – Tiffany, John W.
 - Wisconsin volunteer writes on the William Scott case
10. Participants – Vermont volunteers
 - some comment on the Scott case
11. Vermont Volunteers – Samuel E. Pingree and Wheelock G. Veasey
 - no information related to the Scott case
12. Railroad transportation – Vermont to Washington, D.C.
 - railroads in existence
 - timetables
13. Participants – Lincoln, Abraham
 - notes on the William Scott case
 - William Barton's article
14. Biographical notes – the William Scott case
15. Legend – Ambler, Isaac W.
 - his book on Scott's court-martial
16. Legend – Botsforth, James S.
 - wrote that he saw Lincoln deliver commutation for Scott
17. Legend – Chittenden, Lucius E.
 - contrasting views on his recollections
18. Legend – E.H.M. & "Sleeping on His Post" – poem
19. Legend – Janivier, Francis de Haes
 - "The Sleeping Sentinel" – poem
20. Legend – Murdock, James E.

- recited “The Sleeping Sentinel” before President Lincoln
21. Legend – Taggart, J.S.
 - his account of the William Scott case
 22. Legend – Waite, Otis, T.R.
 - notes on & excerpts from his “Vermont in the Great Rebellion
 23. Legend – miscellaneous versions
 - Drinkwater, Charnwood, Leech, etc.
 24. Debate – Barton, William E. – factual
 - New York Times Oct. 3, 1926 – article by Barton
 - notes re-Barton’s side of the controversy
 25. Debate – Basler, Roy P. – factual
 - says Barton “laid to rest” and “reduced to bare facts” some of the popular legends
 26. Debate – Benedict, George B. – factual
 - Vermont Civil War colonel revises his original history of the Scott episode
 27. Debate – Castleman, Alfred L. – factual
 - Wisconsin volunteer makes no mention of the Scott episode
 28. Debate – Chambre, A. St. John – fiction
 - Episcopal priest claims he interceded with Lincoln for Scott
 29. Debate – Coffin, Charles Carleton – fiction
 - Boston Journal Civil War correspondent in contemporary accounts, makes no mention
 30. Debate – Crane, Charles F. (“Pea Drift”) – fiction
 - Brattleboro Daily Reformer writer sides against Barton
 - includes comments from Canadian Historical Review
 31. Debate – Ferriter, Luke – fiction
 - asserts Barton wrongly calls Lincoln/Scott episode a myth
 - asserts the legend is truth
 - says he was in firing squad chosen to shoot Scott
 32. Debate – Foster, David J. – fiction
 - Vermont politician and orator, spoke on “The Sleeping Sentinel”
 33. Debate – Glover, Waldo – fiction
 - 1916 – feels Barton proven wrong; Lincoln himself pardoned Scott
 - 1947 – re-thinks the issue
 34. Debate – Hambrecht, George P. – fiction
 - Barton is wrong
 35. Debate – Mason, Irving – fiction
 - soldier who served with Scott recalls (in 1927) the episode
 36. Debate – Miles, Leonard B. & Hulday – fiction
 - Vermont volunteer on firing squad stopped by Lincoln
 37. Debate – Proctor, Redfield – factual
 - says Lincoln did not go to Chain Bridge to save Scott but did approve McClellan’s remitting the penalty
 38. Debate – Randall, Capt. F.V. – fiction
 - Vermont Capt. wrote letter describing Lincoln’s role
 39. Debate – Sandburg, Carl – factual

- describes how perfunctory episode became colorful story
- 40. Debate – Tyler, Henry – fiction
 - Wisconsin volunteer saw Lincoln extend the pardon
- 41. Debate – Worcester, Almond – fiction
 - Vermont lieutenant witnessed Lincoln's pardon (1928 letter)
- 42. Debate – summary by McCorison
 - on the Barton/Ferriter differences
- 43. Miscellaneous notes – unrelated to Scott case
- 44. McCorison, Joseph L. – miscellaneous correspondence
 - to McCorison from Rev. Peter Marshall, New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, Washington, DC, 8 November, 1946
 - to McCorison from Tyler Dennett, ed. "Hay Diaries," 4 December, 1946
 - to McCorison from Oliver Barret, 3 February, 1947
- 45. The Sleeping Sentinel
 - McCorison's notes for
 - McCorison's outlines, introductions, and incomplete texts [for a book?]
- 46. Chrittenden Lucius E.
 - "President Lincoln and his administration at the commencement of the War" (photocopy of a lecture given at the Lyceum at Tarrytown, NY, 1867)
- 47. Miscellaneous: Delahey
 - land grants in Illinois, 1800s (copies)
- 48. Miscellaneous: Shoemaker
 - Free-soiler killed in Kansas/Nebraska struggle
- 49. Washington, DC – Weather, 1861; maps; conditions for Sept. 7-9, 1861

Box 3

Folder

1. LG of B correspondence – Includes letters from McCorison's research and others; includes a letter from noted Civil War historian Frank Maloy Anderson, 1937 – 1971
2. Correspondence about Lincoln portraits painted by Albion Harris Bicknell, 1937 – 1954
3. Artist Albion Harris Bicknell—genealogy and family history
4. Artist Albion Harris Bicknell—genealogy and family history; includes McCorison correspondence, 1939 – 1944
5. Photograph of Lincoln bust, the "Lincoln Shrine," at Redlands, CA
6. McCorison's "Abraham Lincoln bills"; expense bills for Lincoln related items and research fees, 1937
7. Lincoln and Lincoln Memorial University
8. Miscellaneous information on Lincoln
9. Correspondence to Guy Richardson about his book, "My Abraham Lincoln," 1937-1949
10. New Salem and Abraham Lincoln
11. The Lincoln Boys (includes the published pamphlet by McCorison), 1966
12. Physical appearance of Abraham Lincoln
13. Lincolniana – dealers: lists and correspondence
14. Lincoln and the preachers
15. Abraham Lincoln: the president and the war years
16. Reviews – The Lincoln Reader, Paul M. Angle

17. Political philosophy of Abraham Lincoln
18. Abraham Lincoln – radio programs
19. Lincoln and the railroads; the “Lincoln Car”
20. Lincoln the rail-splitter
21. The religion of Abraham Lincoln
22. Opening of the Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress, 1947
23. Abraham Lincoln and the Scottish People
24. Lincoln in November 1860 – the Seaver Letter
25. Lincoln shrines and associations
26. W. M. Thayer: bibliography of Lincoln biographies, 1945, 1948
27. Information on “Abraham Lincoln toni kin qa Aesop tawayake kin (Sioux), 1942-1944, 1956
28. “Lincoln with a Lighter Touch” – McCorison speech at Boston University, 1947
29. Lincoln’s arrival in Washington, February 1861
30. Lincoln Memorial, Washington
31. The Lincoln Fellowship of Wisconsin
32. Ernest J. Wessen (book dealer) correspondence, 1942-1949
33. “Meet Mr. Lincoln” – correspondence on article from the Christian Science Monitor written by McCorison, 1945

Box 4**Folder**

1. Lincoln in Massachusetts in 1848
2. Chicago Historical Society
3. Civil War – literature
4. The Confederacy: literature, book lists, etc.
5. Civil War Round Table of Chicago
6. “The Great Lincoln Collections and What Became of Them,” by McCorison – Lincoln Memorial University Collection
7. “The Great Lincoln Collections and What Became of Them,” by McCorison – reading notes, etc.
8. “The Great Lincoln Collections and What Became of Them,” by McCorison – typed script
9. “The Great Lincoln Collections and What Became of Them,” by McCorison – correspondence
10. Lincoln collectors: “The Big Five”
11. Abraham Lincoln – birthday
12. F. Lauriston Bullard – correspondence and more
13. Letters on Lincoln’s death
14. Correspondence and notes about Delahay, including packet of old stamps
15. Delahay notes
16. Delahay notes
17. Mark W. Delahay of Kansas – research, correspondence, notes, etc.
18. Mark W. Delahay of Kansas – research, correspondence, notes, etc.
19. Mark W. Delahay of Kansas – research, correspondence, notes, etc.
20. Delahay Lincolnia
21. Dr. Charles Leib of Illinois

Box 5**Folder**

(McCorison's research on artists; artist/subject followed by topic. In most cases the date indicates the time in Lincoln's life the art represents)

1. Ames, Joseph – Lincoln, May 1865 (painted)
2. Atwood, Jesse – Lincoln in Nov. 1860
3. Barry, Charles A. – Lincoln in June 1860
4. Baumgras, Peter – Lincoln in 1865
5. Billings, Edwin T. – Lincoln 1865-66 (painted)
6. Brown, Henry J. – Lincoln in Aug. 1860
7. Carpenter, Francis B. – Lincoln in Feb. 1864
8. Cogswell, William – Lincoln in 1864
9. Conant, Alban Jasper – Lincoln in Aug. 1860
10. Croasdale, Elizabeth – Lincoln in 1861
11. Fuller, Euclid E. – Lincoln in 1860
12. Hazard, Arthur M. – Lincoln portrait
13. Healy, G.P.A. – Lincoln in Nov. 1860
14. Hicks, Thomas – Lincoln in 1860
15. Hunt, William Morris – Lincoln in 1865
16. Huntington, Daniel – Lincoln miniature, painted 1864/1906

Box 6**Folder**

(Continuation of artists from box 5; numerous index cards McCorison used to record notes are located in this box after the folders)

1. Johnston, Thomas M. – Lincoln in July 1860
2. Lambdin, James R. – Lincoln in 1863
3. Lumley, Arthur – Lincoln at Washington in 1861
4. Matthews, William (also Matheus) – Lincoln in 1865
5. Story, George – undated
6. Travers, George W.F. – Lincoln in 1864-65
7. Willard, William – Lincoln in May 1865
8. Wilson, Matthew – Lincoln in 1865
9. Wright, George – Lincoln in August 1860; Lincoln in Summer 1864

Box 7**Folder**

1. Photographs of Lincoln (original carte-de-visites removed)
2. Campaign portraits of Lincoln from 1858 and 1860
3. Artist unknown – the "Smiling Lincoln"
4. Carroll, Anna Ella – Lincoln's lady strategist
5. Lincolniana – medallion art
6. The Lincolns of Hingham
7. Portraits of Lincoln: Lists, correspondence, pictures, notes on artists
8. Portraits of Lincoln belonging to collector Edward Morrill: correspondence, pictures
9. Portraits of Lincoln – correspondence of McCorison's research on Lincoln portraits

10. Photographs, portraits, and sculptures of Lincoln; relevant correspondence