

McLean County Museum of History

Lincoln Statue Bicentennial Project Collection (1975 – 1978)

Processed by
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Summer 2007

Collection Information

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	One box
COLLECTION DATES:	1975-1985
PROVENANCE:	Gifts
RESTRICTIONS:	None
REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the McLean County Museum of History
ALTERNATIVE FORMATS:	None
OTHER FINDING AIDS:	None
LOCATION:	Archives
NOTES:	None

Historical Sketch

V.L. (“Budd”) Fairfield (1926-2009). Bloomington High School American history teacher, served as a member of the 1976 Bloomington Bicentennial Committee. After the initial meeting on January 23, 1975, Fairfield suggested a statue of Abraham Lincoln be placed in a county or city building.

The committee approved Fairfield's suggestion, and with the assistance of his students he launched the Lincoln statue fund. The intent was to have the project completed by May 1976. However, it became evident that additional help and funds would be needed, so the Selection Committee, made up of ten Bloomington-Normal citizens, including Fairfield, was formed in May 1975.

Students, individuals and many local and county organizations contributed to the funding for the statue. Eventually more than \$16,000 was collected. Some individuals also paid for advertisements in local newspapers. Announcements were also made on local radio and television stations at no charge.

Keith Knoblock, associate professor of art at Illinois State University, was chosen as the sculptor. After scanning many books, visiting Lincoln's tomb in Springfield, and walking the ground at New Salem, Knoblock's impression of Mr. Lincoln was that he was strong and tall.

The Lincoln statue dedication ceremony took place at the Law and Justice Center, on August 28, 1977.

After all bills were paid, the Lincoln Statue Fund bank account was closed with a \$335.52 donation to the McLean County Historical Society in December 1978.

Scope and Content Note

The Lincoln Statue Bicentennial Project collection contains newspaper clippings of articles and advertisements; typed and handwritten memos and notes; copies of typed minutes of selection committee meetings; photographs; and the dedication program. The materials date from 1975 to 1985 and are organized into one box as follows: Folder 1 contains project history. Folder 2 contains the selection committee member list and copies of notes from committee meetings. Folder 3 contains letters about the students' role in the bicentennial project. Folder 4 contains letters and handwritten notes about donations for and participation in the project. Folder 5 contains information about the search for a sculptor to the final statue. Folder 6 contains the original plaque and information about its replacement on the statue. Folders 7, 8 and 9 include the dedication booklets and background. Folder 10 contains information about the dedication ceremony, including the printed agenda with booklet order form. Folders 11, 12, and 13 contain miscellaneous photographs, correspondence and newspaper clippings (not directly related to the project). Folder 14 contains personal and family information about V.L. ("Budd") Fairfield, historian and instructor, who organized and coordinated the project. Folder 15 contains a scrapbook compiled by Sadie F. Fairfield, mother of V.L. Fairfield, about the project.

Folder Inventory

Folder 1: Project History

- 1.1 Lincoln Statue History (3 pages typewritten) with Review in Brief of Monies Collected (6 pages typewritten) attached.
- 1.2 Seventeen Letters (original or copies regarding the project), dated January 24, 1975, through January 8, 1979, including one from A.W. Tompkins to Mr. Fairfield (April 10, 1975) regarding the McLean County Board Resolution attached approving his Lincoln statue idea and Mr. Fairfield's response (April 14, 1975) to Mr. Tompkins.
- 1.3 Three newspaper articles about McLean County Board considering and approving project. Clippings are from the *Daily Pantagraph* and *The Aegis*, Bloomington High School.
- 1.4 Thank you letter from McLean County Historical Society for donation of \$335.52, the final outstanding balance from the Lincoln Statue Project account.

Folder 2: Selection Committee

- 2.1 Member list
- 2.2 Five miscellaneous letters (originals or copies) of invitation and acceptance.
- 2.3 Copies of notes from committee meetings dated July 13, [1976?], through November, 14, 1977, signed by Elizabeth Masters, Secretary.
- 2.4 Miscellaneous letters written by Elizabeth Masters at the direction of the committee dated from February 10, 1977, through November 3, 1977.
- 2.5 Updated Finance Data and Summary, circa December 12, 1978.

Folder 3: Education / Fundraising

- 3.1 Two letters and list of potential candidates for education committee.
- 3.2 Thirty-four letters and promotional materials dated 4-2-1975 to 5-22-1976 about the student bicentennial project.
- 3.3 Three undated letters about education and fundraising activities.
- 3.4 Three-page recap of project to date (sometime in early 1976 and prior to May 30).
- 3.5 Letter from David Davis, dated June 16, 1976, saying he had requested contributions from 23 McLean County banks and savings and loan organizations.
- 3.6 Twenty-two newspaper articles (undated and from April 6, 1975, to June 29, 1976) trace the student Bicentennial project. Clippings are from the *Daily Pantagraph*; *The Aegis*, Bloomington High School; and *The Normalite*.
- 3.7 Three stories written by students, December 1975, relating to the statue or Lincoln.

Folder 4: Donation Letters

- 4.1 Sixty-nine letters and hand-written notes dated September 22, 1975, through December 13, 1977, about donations for and participation in the Lincoln statue project.
- 4.2 Seven letters and hand-written notes, undated, from students and adults, about donations for the Lincoln statue project.
- 4.3 Bloomington Federal Savings and Loan Association saving account record book, opened April 19, 1975, and closed July 7, 1975.
- 4.4 Two receipt stubs for donations of \$1,000 each from the City of Bloomington dated February 11, 1976, and September 27, 1976, with thank you note from V.L. Fairfield.
- 4.5 Two receipt stubs for donations collected at Bloomington High School in the amounts of \$212.00 dated February 9, 1976, and \$1,210.00 dated June 25, 1976.
- 4.6 Recap of school contributions to the Lincoln Statue fund.
- 4.7 Photocopy of hand-drawn McLean County map showing schools that contributed to Lincoln Statue Fund, undated.
- 4.8 General final summary of funds collected dated January 1979.

Folder 5: The Sculpture

- 5.1 Photos of Lincoln from *Chicago Tribune Magazine*, dated February 12, 1956, and February 6, 1966.
- 5.2 Thirteen copies or originals of letters concerning search for sculptor and sculpture specifications, dated April 14, 1975, through August 3, 1977.
- 5.3 Clipping from *Pantagraph*, July 30, 1975, titled: "Lincoln sculptor object of search."
- 5.4 Copy of agreement with sculptor signed by Keith Knoblock (artist) and V.L. Fairfield (chairman, Lincoln Statue Committee), dated September 24, 1976.
- 5.5 Photograph, undated, of Keith Knoblock, sculptor, making finishing touches to statue, with V.L. Fairfield watching.
- 5.6 Letter and invoice for construction of base for Abraham Lincoln statue installed in Lobby of the Law and Justice Center, dated October 10, 1977.
- 5.7 Copy of letter from Mr. Fairfield to Jerry Butler, Chicago City Architect commending Keith Knoblock, dated April 25, 1978.
- 5.8 Thirteen articles, dated from July 30, 1975, to October 6, 1985, trace the search for a Sculptor to the final statue. Clippings are from the *Daily Pantagraph*; *Travelhost*; *The Aegis*, Bloomington High School; the Illinois State University *Alumni News*; the ISU *Vidette*; and the ISU *Life*.

Folder 6: Plaque

- 6.1 Original plaque (not the version on the statue).
- 6.2 Note dated September 10, 1977, regarding cost to engrave original plaque.
- 6.3 Correspondence regarding changes made to original plaque, dated October 18, 1977, through October 27, 1977 (copies or originals of six letters).
- 6.4 Originals of two letters dated September 20, 1978, and November 29, 1978, regarding preparation of final plaque.

Folder 7: Dedication Booklet / Hard Cover (one copy)

Folder 8: Dedication Booklet / Paper Cover (one copy)

Folder 9: Dedication Booklet Background

- 9.1 Booklet drafts and background information.
- 9.2 Printing information (four documents – undated; August 10, 1977; August 23, 1977; and July 21, 1978).
- 9.3 Letter of thanks to *Pantagraph* from Barbara Stuart for ad to order copies of the commemorative (dedication) booklet and copy of the ad.
- 9.4 Thirteen letters regarding complementary copies of the dedication booklet.

Folder 10: Dedication Ceremony

- 10.1 Three letters regarding possible and final date for dedication ceremony.
- 10.2 Tentative agenda.
- 10.3 Clippings from *Pantagraph*, August 24, 1977, announcing dedication to feature actor and 7 August 1977 announcement.
- 10.4 Dedication ceremony printed agenda with booklet order form on reverse side.
- 10.5 Copy of information from Lincoln's writings and speeches (appeared to be selected readings for dedication program).

Folder 11: Miscellaneous Photographs

- 11.1 "Budd" Fairfield with Lincoln statue, early August 1977.
- 11.2 Lincoln statue is admired by unknown people on dedication day, August 28, 1977.

Folder 12: Miscellaneous Correspondence

- 12.1 Seventeen letters or notes regarding various stages of the project, dated February 19, 1975 to August, 11, 1983.

Folder 13: Miscellaneous Newspaper Clippings – Not Directly Related to Project

- 13.1 Twenty-two newspaper articles, three undated with remainder dated June 23, 1971 to February 12, 1980.

Folder 14: V.L. (“Budd”) Fairfield - Personal and Family

- 14.1 Personal Data – includes newspaper articles and other family information dated December 18, 1966, to August 23, 1991.
- 14.2 Four newspaper articles regarding Fairfield’s personal involvement in the Lincoln Statue project, dated September 15, 1977, and October 6, 1977.
- 14.3 Seven miscellaneous clippings and bulletin board announcement related to teaching activities, dated January 30, 1974, to February 3, 1976
- 14.4 Letter from Kewanee, Illinois, superintendent of schools regarding Fairfield’s TV survey, dated February 4, 1980.
- 14.5 V.L. Fairfield obituary, *Pantagraph*, June 7, 2009 (printout from Pantagraph website).

Folder 15: Scrapbook dated 1976

- 15.1 62 articles, dated February 7, 1975 to August 24, 1977, compiled by Mrs. Sadie G. Fairfield, 115 W. Lucas, Sibley, IL 61773. Some duplicate others in this collection.