

1212 N. 32nd Ave.
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Mr. Raymond P. LaCasse,
6 Grove St.,
Fall River, Mass.

Feb. 16, 1955

Dear Mr. LaCasse:

The New York Daily News has sent me your address and forwarded a clipping of a photograph of Abraham Lincoln, which you were kind enough to send that paper in connection with the picture of the Lincoln picture published Feb. 6th.

Your interest in aiding in the search is highly appreciated.

Considerable research has gone on for a matter of months with nothing conclusive, hence the suggestion that there perhaps exists, somewhere, an uncatalogued photograph.

Those who have examined the painting are well versed in art, the knowledge of art and what the artist has in mind, whether he is creating or copying. It would be impossible to create a Lincoln.

The photograph of the picture you sent aroused immediate suspicion, because it is one of the few "direct view" pictures of Lincoln although it is perhaps the most famous one ever made of that President.

Some books, of fairly recent publication date, list it as the Alexander Gardner photograph, made Nov. 15, 1863.

As an example of variations, please look at Life Magazine, Feb. 14 pg. 22. You will note this same photograph but listed here simply as November, 1863.

The fact of the matter this particular picture is known as the Gardner-Rice photograph. The Mentor, for March, 1926, a magazine of very high standard and known accuracy (it should be available on file in the research room of a large library) says taken in 1864, not 1863. "On the day that General Grant received his commission as Lieutenant General, Feb. 22, 1864, he and President the President had their photographs taken. The photograph was by Gardner; the negatives when discovered, in 1891, had become the property of his successor, M.P. Rice." (Perhaps this date, 1864 was found in error later, because if you will look through lately published books on Lincoln you will see it there under the date, 1863) Since that was beside the point in the picture at hand, we have gone no further on that score--checking and crosschecking--a matter of weeks of work.

I am returning the clipping you enclosed. If you will compare it, you will observe several points noted by us during our extensive comparison and research:

1-Collar and ~~xxx~~ tie appear at same angle and at same tilt in several of his photographs, so that should be discarded in this comparison.

2-The eyes are more sunken and there are decided shadows in the Gardner picture compared with the painting.

3-The fore-lip is longer in the oil painting. Note too the crease on the nose, very decided running cross-wise in the Gardner. This could and would not have been overlooked by the copist.

4-The beard growth in the Gardner approaches the lower lip. In the painting there is a marked area between the lower lip and the beard growth.

5-Measure across the face. Note that the Gardner is more pear shaped, the cheeks sunken. Note that the painting is more square.

6-Then consider that the painting is the work of an above the medium artist, who would not have misjudged so many points, remembering that in the period that this painting was done, exact copying was the aim of the artist.

It is possible the artist wished to create a younger appearing Lincoln, but that is doubtful. He had not yet reached the stature where this would have been desirable in the mind of the artist.

I am enclosing a newspaper clipping concerning some additional background on the painting. This is from the newspaper on which I am employed.

Not long ago the museum director expressed the hope that someone who was familiar with the actual origin of the painting, having seen it hung someplace in years past in the area in which it was found, would make himself known. That would give us further clues.

Thanks again for your interest, and I hope this gives you some insight into the care and consideration in which research was undertaken. By the same token that after such care, no assertion was made that it was made from such and such a photograph, it is not felt that the assertion should be made at this time. I'm afraid it will take another picture with a closer resemblance.

What character there is in the Lincoln photograph you sent! How strong it is! The very lines in the face, under the eyes, the very depth of the eyes with their "patient sadness" are characteristics that an artist could not overlook, nor could he fail to capture them.

Sincerely

Click Relander