

1212 N. 32nd Ave.
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Mr. Dick Owen,
The New York News,
220 East Forty Second St.
New York City, 17, N.Y.

Feb. 15, 1955

Edit

Dear Mr. Owen:

In relation to the Lincoln painting which appeared on the News' roto cover Feb. 6, and your inquiry concerning various photographs;

1-The photograph cited in Portrait Life of Lincoln, Patriot Publishing Co. 1910 must be one that was previously compared when I was making extended research last summer. The book is presently out of the library and will be examined upon its return.

2-The Rutgers University Press citation [which you do not list by title, is apparently not available here, although the library will attempt to locate it at the state or elsewhere. The Lincoln Reader, edited with intro. by Paul M. [McClelland] Angle, Rutgers University Press, 1947, is available but contains no photograph remotely similar.

I am well satisfied that the photograph however is that taken by Matthew B. Brady, 1863 [the photograph referred to in the coll. cited works of Abraham Lincoln--Rutgers] or one taken by Alexander Gardner, Nov. 15, 1863.

And I am equally confident the two mentioned photographs are the ones bearing the closest similarity to the Lincoln Oil in the Maryhill Museum of Fine Arts.

The research that was done on it, including that by the museum, extended over several months. All common and uncommon books containing Lincoln photos were examined. The two referred to, the Gardner and Brady, were the only direct front views. Of course we are not Lincoln authorities but there was expert examination by experts as to age of painting, etc. and the common practices known to artists and researchers were helpful.

I strongly suspect the two pictures you cite, indefinitely are the Lincoln and Gardner photos. In these, the face is much more shallower as contrasted to a square face in the painting; the lips are distinctly different; the hair highlights are different (and these highlights would not have been overlooked by an artist capable of portraying Lincoln as the oil painter)

The Brady, 1863 shows the hair combed more upward as contrasted to across, to the left; size and depth of the eyes are different; the nose is different and the beard is shorter. More of the chin is exposed in the oil painting than the photographs believed cited. And to those with art training as thorough as those who examined the painting and photographs, it is inconceivable that such good work could have been done and such obvious things could have been overlooked--remembering that the artist was not trying to improvise a Lincoln picture but to make an oil painting of a known photograph at that time.

I am taking off Saturday to go to the museum--distance 80 miles from Yakima and will review with the museum director, a trained artist himself, his previous conclusions and to see if by chance he has received any similar communications.

I recall that it was his hope that were the picture published, someone might recognize it from having seen it say 50 or 60 years ago, before it was hidden in the wall of the building at Woodland. Or that more specific information will come to light from Woodland itself, [distance 175 miles where I spent a day of my vacation in research on that one phase of the picture's background]

I do not know whether the extended notes were made available to you or not.

Ths e stated that the painting had been brought to the gallery by the old timer now living in Woodnoe Hills, not far distant. They did not state that the painting was owned by the museum. However it was pointed out then and subsequently reaffirmed that the owner attaches no value to the painting, is not trying to market it, nor does he wish to. And it will probably remain at the museum, for safe keeping and eventual possession.

The notes also stated: "Of the many photographs examined to determine from which the painting could have been copied, the most likely was one made by Alexander Gardner on Nov. 15, 1863. However the eyes in the painting are not as sunken and the face more full."

I appreciate receiving the leads, and will look forward to any additional information that might be productive, and I am sure the museum will do likewise. I shall be happy to pass on what additional information I find after visiting the museum, if any productive letters have been received there.

I also hope to have the opportunity, which I may not, to probe around a couple of old Indian camps with some of my fine old sources and come up with some pictures of men and women whose ~~parents~~ grandparents were there when Lewis and Clark came down the river --150 years ago next fall. This is the L and C Sesquicentennial.

My regards to Mr. White. Thanks again for sending on the information and don't hesitate to send any further leads that might develop.

Sincerely,

Click Relander

(City Desk-Yakima Republic)