

"It is a strange fact" mused Dr. Hunt, "that three of our greatest men—Washington, Andrew Jackson and Lincoln—never read a book when they could help it, or for the joy of reading. Lincoln developed his own mind without imitating the thoughts and conclusions of others as recorded in books.

The main body of Lincoln's papers is in possession of his son, Robert Lincoln, and will come eventually to the Library of Congress. These are mainly the state papers and are mostly well known. They are of much less intimate interest than those of Mr. Jesse Weik, of Greencastle, Ind., who owns most of the papers pertaining to Lincoln's early life. Many of these were gathered together by Lincoln's law partner, William H. Herndon, for use in the preparation of his biography of Abraham Lincoln. The Weik collection of papers is the most remarkable and interesting, containing as it does the rare epistles of the early friends of the Lincoln family, who were drawn from the very humblest class.

"Weik also has many of the law papers of Herndon and Lincoln, but these are not of much historical value, being briefs and other legal documents drawn up by Lincoln. In the law he was a careful and good lawyer, and methodical in conducting the affairs of others, although he had no method in conducting his own affairs.

"Lincoln stood for the rights of the common man, but he did not when President attempt to govern by means of common men. He surrounded himself in official life, for the most part, with men of training in the Government affairs, and he had no antipathy toward any man who had superior social associations to his own. An instance of that is the confidence he placed in John Hay—a litterateur, scholar and poet.

And while he was in the White House he may have shocked his visitors by his uncouth attitudes; nevertheless, he observed all the forms that were usual and according to the traditions of the Executive Mansion.

"When Lincoln was in Illinois his acquaintances were mainly the ordinary run of politicians, and hardly any of his friends rose to National importance. Two exceptions were Elihu B. Washburn, long time a member of Congress, Secretary of State and Minister to France, and Senator Lyman Trumbull. He was very little known in the East and was nominated by Western votes. An interesting result of Lincoln's friendship with Washburn was that Washburn first introduced to his notice Ulysses S. Grant. Washburn had known Grant at Balena, Ill., and took him out of the tannery where he was working for his father, and succeeded in getting him a commission in the Army. Grant's military promotions were all made at the request of Washburn, although his requests had their foundation in Grant's achievements.