

Honorary Degrees

DRAWER 4 EDUCATION

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# Abraham Lincoln and Education

## Honorary Degrees

Excerpts from newspapers and other  
sources

From the files of the  
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

### A LINCOLN-DOUGLAS MONUMENT.

In the brief account which ABRAHAM LINCOLN wrote in the third person of his own education he said:

He was never in a college or academy as a student and never inside of a college or academy building till since he had a law license.

One college cherishes the memory of his having at least walked through its halls on a memorable day in the history of the United States, and it was the first college to give him an honorary degree—before he was even nominated for the Presidency. The occasion of his visit was the Lincoln-Douglas Debate at Galesburg, Ill.

DOUGLAS too had no formal schooling beyond what he got in Canandaigua Academy, in Ontario County, N. Y. But he became one of the incorporators of the University of Chicago and two years before the Debates gave the site of about ten acres in the very heart of the South Side of Chicago for the institution of whose board he was president—the institution whose name and whose alumni were taken over by the new University of Chicago.

It was planned to hold the Galesburg Debate in a park at the centre of the town, but a raw northwest wind was blowing and an emergency platform was erected in the lee of the east wall of the new Knox College building, now known as "Old Main," which was then fresh from the hands of the builders. So far as known, it is the only building now standing that had association with any one of the famous Debates. It was not until this, the fifth, Debate, as Miss TARBELL has said, that LINCOLN found it possible to bring the discussion back to what four years before he had declared to be the crux of the whole matter, that "slavery was wrong and " must be kept back or it would spread " over the whole nation." What he was fighting, he told the Galesburg audience, " was moral and social and political evil."

What he was working for was a policy that looked to the prevention of slavery as a wrong; and he looked hopefully to the time when as a wrong it would come to an end.

The gifts of graduates and former students of Knox College, every one of whom in the last seventy-five years has been under tuition for some time, or long or short, in this building, are restoring it to the state in which it was when the Lincoln-Douglas Debate was held, and so are not only prolonging its useful life but helping to preserve it as a permanent national memorial of the Joint Debate, some of whose words these walls alone of all that still stand remember.

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# Lincoln's A. B. Was From School of Hard Knocks

But Later, Colleges Honoring Him With Doctorates Honored Only Themselves

By Stewart W. Mc Clelland

President of Lincoln Memorial University

Special to The *Christian Science Monitor*

Harrogate, Tenn.

A log fire, a hearth, a young man sprawled in front of it with a book between his elbows—or a tree with a youth lying on his back in its shade with a copy of Blackstone in his hands—these are the pictures which we see when we think of Abraham Lincoln and his connection with any educational institution. Lincoln was a self-educated man, but not all his diplomas came from the university of adversity, for three colleges conferred upon him the honorary Doctor of Laws.

Like most self-educated men, Lincoln had a high regard for education in general, and it must have been a great source of satisfaction to him, and I am sure to Mary Todd, when the Board of Trustees of Knox College, at their meeting held on July 3, 1839, granted him the first Doctorate ever voted by the College.

So elated were the Trustees of Knox College over the nomination of Illinois' "Favorite Son" that they did not wait to discover the results of the November election, but six weeks after the Chicago convention this Minute was spread upon the proceedings of the board: "On motion the 17th recommendation of the faculty was adopted, and it was ordered that the honorary degree of LL. D. be conferred upon the Hon. Abraham Lincoln of Springfield."

It is too late to find out who fostered the idea of conferring this degree, but when one sees the name of Orville H. Browning in the Board of Trustees, one is led to suspect at once that this prominent member had a good deal to do with it, for Browning worked continuously and loyally\* for Lincoln at the Chicago convention. This was the beginning of a friendship between the two men which was terminated only by the assassination of Lincoln.

## Given In Absentia

Apparently this degree was given in absentia, as were the other degrees which Lincoln later received. It was conferred on July 4th at the Knox College Commencement by the President, Harvey Curtis. The Galesburg Free Democrat, reports: "The announcement of last night's very appropriate honor elicited great applause from the audience."

Though Lincoln did not go to Galesburg to have his degree conferred upon him, he had spoken at Galesburg on a most memorable occasion in 1858. On Oct. 7 of that year, Lincoln met Douglas in that city for the fifth of their joint debates, when he addressed the second largest audience of his entire career.

A story persists in Galesburg that as Mr. Lincoln stepped through one of the windows of "Old Main" out on the platform which had been erected in front of the building he remarked, "At last I have gone through Knox College."

## But He Wrote the Gettysburg Address

"I was never in a college or academy as a student, and never inside of a college or academy building till since I had a law license."

Abraham Lincoln

the Trustees of Columbia College. . . . Abraham Lincoln was nominated for the degree of Doctor of Laws."

Then from a New York paper under the date June 27, 1861, we find a story of the Commencement Exercises of Columbia College: "Yesterday the one hundred and seventh Commencement of Columbia College was held in the Academy of Music, in Fourteenth Street, the Hon. Chas. King, LL. D., President, in the Chair. . . ."

Honorary Degrees—LL. D., Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States; John Anthon, counselor at law and an alumnus of the College; Alex. W. Bradford, counselor at law. . . ."

One would be interested to know what was the subject of President King's address, but apparently, the only thing that the historians are interested in is the fact that on that day Columbia College made Lincoln an honorary alumnus. Again the degree seems to have been conferred in absentia, for the newspapers make no mention of Mr. Lincoln's presence, an event which would certainly have been recorded if the President had been in New York.

## As a Christmas Present

More than three years of America's tragic era moved across the national scene. Then in December, 1864, the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University) felt constrained to present President Lincoln, who had been re-elected for another term, a Christmas present in appreciation of his service to the nation.

The minutes of the Board of Trustees for Dec. 20, 1864, record that: "The honorary degree of LL. D. was conferred upon His Excellency Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States." The only other reference which is found in the records of Princeton concerning this degree is the record at the meeting on June, 1865, when the letter of President Lincoln to President MacLean "expressing his acceptance of the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws which was conferred on him at the last meeting of the Board, was read." The full text of this letter was incorporated in the Minutes of the Trustees of that date, and is as follows:

Executive Mansion  
Washington, Dec. 27, 1864

My dear Sir:

of our contest. Among the most gratifying proofs of this conviction is the hearty devotion everywhere exhibited by our schools and colleges in the national cause.

I am most thankful if my labors have seemed to conduce to the preservation of those institutions under which alone we can expect good government and in its train sound learning and the progress of the liberal arts.

I am sir very truly

Your obedient servant,

(signed) A. Lincoln

## In Hay's Handwriting

This letter, signed by Abraham Lincoln, together with its franked envelope with Lincoln's signature, is to be found in Treasure Room of Princeton University. The pressure of business in Washington apparently made it impossible for Lincoln to write the letter himself, as he did so many personal documents of this type, so he must have dictated it to John Hay, for the letter is in Hay's handwriting.

We do not know what Lincoln's reactions were to the other degrees which he received, but his letter to Dr. MacLean shows so clearly the man's humility, for he does not accept this degree as an honor to himself, but as tribute to his policies and "the course of government" which he represents.

Practically without exception, all of Lincoln's opponents in the political arena were men who had come from the best schools of their time, but Lincoln proved himself not only their equal, but oftentimes their superior. A product of the "Forest College," the newspapers, and the library, his education was thorough enough to produce his "Farewell" at Springfield, the "Gettysburg Address," and the "Second Inaugural," and to be recognized by those who held in their hands the authority for bestowing academic honors.

DESCRIPTION  
OF  
**BANVARD'S PANORAMA**  
OF THE  
MISSISSIPPI, MISSOURI,  
AND  
OHIO RIVERS,  
EXTENSIVELY KNOWN AS THE  
**"THREE-MILE PAINTING,"**  
REPRESENTING A VIEW OF COUNTRY OVER  
3000 MILES IN LENGTH,  
EXTENDING FROM THE  
MOUTH OF THE YELLOW STONE ON THE MISSOURI,  
AND THE LITTLE MIAMI, ON THE OHIO,  
TO THE  
CITY OF NEW ORLEANS, ON THE MISSISSIPPI,  
BEING BY FAR  
**THE LARGEST PICTURE**  
EVER EXECUTED BY MAN.

LONDON:  
PRINTED BY BLED AND FARDON, PATERNOSTER ROW.  
1857.

enormity, it was impossible to preserve properly, so it was cut up into sections and used in part for scenery in theatres, the rest stored away in the cellars of relatives. Time and neglect did the rest. John Banvard died in 1891, in the home of his son at Watertown, South Dakota, leaving a considerable body of poetry many of which still exist in various historical museums, as well as numerous paintings, such as "The Sea of Galilea", which hangs in the Public Library of St. Paul, Minn. Such was the life of a self-taught artist whose only teacher was nature herself.

*Adele Banvard was born in North Dakota in the house in which her grandfather died. She is retired as a history teacher from the high school of East Orange, New Jersey.*

## Lincoln's Degree from Princeton

ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S ACCEPTANCE OF THE honorary degree of Doctor of Laws from Princeton University, the only honorary degree Princeton has ever conferred in absentia, was recalled on Lincoln's Birthday with the display in the University Library of the letter of appreciation President Lincoln wrote December 27, 1864, to Princeton's tenth president, John Maclean.

In the three-page letter, apparently penned by a White House secretary but signed by President Lincoln, the beloved Civil War leader stated in his characteristically humble fashion: "I am most thankful if my labors have seemed to conduce to the preservation of those institutions under which alone we can expect good government and in its train sound learning and the progress of the liberal arts."

Forwarding his reply to Dr. Maclean shortly after the Union forces had launched the campaign that was to end the Civil War, President Lincoln also said: "Thoughtful men must feel that the fate of civilization upon this continent is involved in the issue of our contest. Among the most gratifying proofs of this conviction is the hearty devotion everywhere exhibited by our schools and colleges to the national cause."

Over the years Princeton has conferred honorary degrees upon 15 Presidents of the United States, seven before their election to office, seven during their terms of office and one following his retirement from the White House. President Eisenhower received the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws in June, 1947, at the convocation that marked the close of the University's Bicentennial Year.

### **LINCOLN GOT DEGREE IN HIS SHIRT SLEEVES**

Two rather obscure facts about Abraham Lincoln were made known yesterday: Lincoln had an honorary degree from Columbia University, and he was probably the only individual to receive such a degree in shirt sleeves.

Dr. John A. Krout, vice president of Columbia, who made the announcement, said that President Lincoln received the honorary Doctor of Laws degree on June 26, 1861, from Dr. Francis Lieber, then Professor of Political Philosophy at Columbia College.

Dr. Lieber was greeted by the President at the White House although the Columbia representative was not certain that the strange, lanky person he met was a statesman.

Lincoln's Secretary of State, William H. Seward, introduced the professor to the President. Then, the degree delivered, Dr. Lieber was escorted out, but not before Mr. Seward had time to tell the President he should have been wearing his black coat for the occasion.

The President was most apologetic. "I intended to do so," he said, "but the doctor will excuse me. I was not aware it was so late."

The incident was reported in the Frank Friedel book, "The Life of Francis Lieber," published by the Louisiana State University Press.

# Lincoln Given Law Degrees by 3 Schools

## Honored by Knox 6 Weeks After Nomination

BY PERCY WOOD

As college commencement time arrives, Ralph Newman, historical authority, has reminded THE TRIBUNE that Lincoln received honorary doctorates of law from Columbia and Princeton universities and Knox college, Galesburg, two of them during his Presidency.

Knox was the first. Its board of trustees voted to confer the degree on July 3, 1860, only six weeks after Lincoln had received the Republican nomination in Chicago.

But Lincoln had been known to the college community since two years earlier, On Oct. 7, 1858, when he participated there in one of his famous debates with his opponent for the United States Senate, Stephen A. Douglas.

### Lincoln Didn't Attend

Lincoln wasn't present to receive the honor — the first doctorate Knox granted and still the only one it has conferred upon a President—but he got word of it from a friend, Orville H. Browning, before he was formally notified by the college president, Harvey Curtis.

The day after the trustees voted the degree, Curtis wrote to "Dear Lincoln." He said the Knox faculty had asked the board to so honor the prospective President "without outside prompting."

"You will therefore . . . consider yourself a scholar as

### History Quiz

## Do You Remember?

Do you have a question for this column? Send it on a postcard, with your name and address, to History Quiz, Chicago Tribune, Chicago, Ill., 60611. If Ralph Newman, historian and Lincoln scholar, chooses your question for a future column, we'll pay you \$5.

### QUESTIONS

1. How many Presidents have been governors? *James E. Knowles, Downers Grove.*

2. When did women first work for the federal government? *Louis Miceli, Westmont, Ill.*

3. What was the Wyoming massacre? *Mrs. John Buis, Chicago.*

4. Who were Currier & Ives? *Arthur V. Blum, Niles, Ill.*

5. Who said "All the world loves a lover"? *Mrs. Joan Stanley, Chicago.*

[Answers on page 13, sec. 1B]



Newman

well as a gentleman, and deport yourself accordingly," Curtis said jocularly. "This may not be to you a very gratifying tribute, coming, as it does, from a young institution [Knox was chartered by the legislature in 1837] just struggling for reputation, and for a place among our distinguished seats of learning.

### Promises No Discredit

"But I may say [as a trustee], for your comfort, that it is one of the best endowed and destined to become one of the most useful colleges in the land, and that in after time it will be no discredit to you that you received your degree at her hands."

A Princeton spokesman could only confirm that Lincoln's LL.D was granted during the June, 1863, commencement, and that the document was mailed to him at the White House. He had no other de-

tails, he told the New York correspondent of THE TRIBUNE.

Much more is known of the exact circumstances of that awarded the President by Columbia, whose trustees voted the doctorate on May 20, 1861. It was personally presented to Lincoln on June 27, 1861, by Francis Lieber, professor of philosophy at Columbia, and the President was alerted two days earlier by Secretary of State William H. Seward to expect Lieber.

Seward's memorandum to his chief was as follows:

"My dear sir: I have engaged to present to you tomorrow, at half past 11 o'clock, Dr. Francis Lieber of Columbia college, New York, who comes to deliver to you the diploma conferring upon you the degree of LL.D.

"At 12 o'clock, I have promised to present Lord Lyons, who brings a letter from Queen Victoria announcing the death of her mother. On neither occasion is a formal speech expected."

### Tells Lieber's Reaction

Lieber's reactions to the event, which follow, are taken from the book, "Francis Lieber: 19th Century Liberal", by Frank Friedel of Harvard university, published by the

Louisiana State University Press in 1947. Permission to reprint from it was granted THE TRIBUNE.

Friedel wrote: "Prof. Lieber went to the White House in the official capacity as a Columbia representative to confer the degree on Lincoln. When Seward introduced him to the President, the German-born professor was not quite sure that this strange person was a statesman.

"He is far better than people think, but oh, so funny," Lieber reported to his wife.

### Put on Coat

"When we went away Seward said, 'I shall return with Lord Lyons; you had better put on your black coat. You ought to have put it on for Dr. Lieber.

Lincoln replied, 'I intended to do so, but the doctor will excuse me. I was not aware it was so late.'

This prompted the New York Times to headline its story of the incident: "Lincoln Got Degree In His Shirtsleeves."

It apparently was not customary in those days for a citation to accompany honorary degrees, as it is now. At least neither of the universities that honored Lincoln has a record of one.



# Of U.S. Presidents, Harvard and Honorary Degrees

By P.J. WINGATE

Will Harvard grant an honorary degree to Ronald Reagan in 1981? Before anyone starts to snicker or comes up with a question of his own, such as "who cares?" let it be explained that the question of a Harvard degree for President Reagan is an important one.

Any President of the United States needs to have support from groups—corporation presidents, coal miners, preachers, farmers, editors, waiters, academicians and many others. Such support makes it easier for him to lead the nation and otherwise do his job. Support from that last group, the academicians, is probably of more than average value because professors tend to be articulate and make themselves heard. Also, they are widely quoted by other people who act on the assumption that the professors understand what they are talking about. This assumption sometimes turns out to be false but it is widespread nevertheless.

But why single out Harvard? Does the Crimson speak for all of academia? Certainly not. Professors insist on speaking for themselves and will not permit any institution to speak for them—not even their own, much less a foreign one.

Nevertheless, there are good reasons for looking at Harvard when trying to guess whether President Reagan will be generally accepted by academia. If Harvard puts its brand on him by means of an honorary degree he will be well on the way to acceptance by the whole herd.

For one thing, Harvard is the oldest of all American colleges and universities and

it is regarded, in some circles, as the best. (The first of these two claims cannot be questioned but it should be admitted at once that the second one can be and often is.)

Furthermore, Harvard started the whole business of honorary degrees in America, years before other institutions were even a fleeting notion in the heads of their founders. Also, the Crimson long ago established an enviable reputation for astuteness in choosing the Presidents it would offer honorary degrees. Altogether, Harvard has granted honorary degrees to 15 of the 39 men who have held the office of Chief Executive and the consensus of historians has been that most of these 15 were outstanding statesmen.

For example, six of the first seven Presidents—Washington, John Adams, Jefferson, Monroe, John Quincy Adams and Jackson—received Harvard honoraries. Why James Madison was slighted is not known; perhaps Harvard did not like the fact that he hid out in the Virginia countryside when the British invaded Washington and looted the White House during the War of 1812.

Anyway, having missed only one of the first seven Presidents, Harvard then proceeded to skip over the next eight who followed Jackson—Van Buren, Harrison, Tyler, Polk, Taylor, Fillmore, Pierce and Buchanan—and history has not given them high grades either. In fact, they have been called "the undistinguished eight" and "the eight forgotten by Harvard."

The Crimson record in more recent years has not been quite so good but even so Harvard scored some hits, according to

the historians, by honoring the two Roosevelts, Wilson, Eisenhower and Kennedy. In fact they picked no real clinkers during the 20th Century even though Taft and Hoover are considered by some people to rank below the average of that first six or the five just above. Anyway, the entire group is such that Mr. Reagan probably would be happy to join it if Harvard makes him an offer.

But if no offer is forthcoming, Mr. Reagan may take some consolation from two facts in the history of Harvard honoraries for Presidents.

First, one Harvard offer was rejected; Grover Cleveland turned down an honorary LL.D. The old battler from Buffalo did not reject Harvard scornfully but replied that his knowledge of the law was too meager to make him "worthy of such a higher honor." Nevertheless, after he left office he did accept an honorary LL.D. from Princeton. Whether this was because he thought he had learned some law during his eight years in the White House or because, as has been wickedly suggested in some quarters, he thought an LL.D. from Princeton was not worth as much as one from Harvard, no one can now say.

The other reason Mr. Reagan may not be dismayed if Harvard ignores him is that it also ignored Abraham Lincoln, but then awarded honorary degrees to Grant and Hayes, who have not fared well in the history books.

There is nothing in the records to explain what now seems strange behavior on the part of Harvard, but perhaps the polished Bostonians of that era thought Honest Abe was too rough and homespun to be

given high academic honors. Most of the other colleges seemed to agree because Lincoln received only three honorary degrees, and one of them was from Knox College in Illinois, which seemed to have some doubts about how Abe might behave in polite society. In a letter to Lincoln advising him of their intention to make him an LL.D., the Knox authorities also told him that "You will, therefore, after tomorrow, consider yourself a scholar as well as a gentleman and deport yourself accordingly." The Great Liberator apparently was not disturbed by this kind of Dutch Uncle advice, because he carefully preserved the letter and his Knox diploma in his personal papers.

In contrast to Lincoln's three honorary degrees—Columbia and Princeton gave him the other two—Lyndon Johnson received 34 and Herbert Hoover 93.

It is true that even Washington was awarded only five honorary degrees but they represented nearly half of the colleges in existence at that time. In addition to Harvard's, Washington received LL.D. degrees from Yale, Brown, Pennsylvania and Washington College. If Mr. Reagan were to receive degrees from an equal percentage of today's colleges he would have to accept 10 or 15 per week for several years. And he may get that many invitations, so it is certain that he will have to reject most of them.

But an invitation from Harvard would be different. Even if Mr. Reagan decided, like Cleveland, that he was not worthy of such a high honor his decision would surely be vetoed by Nancy, who has a different opinion of his worth.

The ball is now in Harvard's court.

Mr. Wingate is a retired executive of DuPont Co.

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<p>Wednesday, June 26, 1861. Washington, DC. <a href="#">Browse Month</a></p>	<p>Lord Lyons presents letter from Queen Victoria to President announcing death of mother, Duchess of Kent. <i>N.Y. Times</i>, 27 June 1861.</p> <p>President sends Queen letter of condolence. <a href="#">Abraham Lincoln to Queen Victoria</a>, 26 June 1861, <i>CW</i>, 4:417.</p>
<p><a href="#">→</a></p> <p><a href="#">→</a></p>	<p>Receives honorary degree of LL.D. from Columbia College; Dr. Francis Lieber, president of Columbia, presents award personally. <i>N.Y. Tribune</i>, 27 June 1861; <i>N.Y. Times</i>, 27 June 1861.</p> <p>[On July 4, 1860, Lincoln received his first honorary degree, LL.D. from Knox College, Galesburg, Ill.]</p>
<p>Tuesday, December 27, 1864. Washington, DC. <a href="#">Browse Month</a></p> <p><a href="#">→</a></p>	<p>President confers with Sec. Fessenden regarding appointment to West Point. <a href="#">Memorandum: Appointment of Franklin Yeaton</a>, 27 December 1864, <i>CW</i>, 8:184-85.</p> <p>Cabinet meets. Welles, <i>Diary</i>.</p> <p>Lincoln sends for O. H. Browning to come to White House as early as convenient. Hay to Browning, 27 December 1864, Orville H. Browning Papers, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, Springfield, IL.</p> <p>Confers again with him on cotton trade; also inquires about releasing William N. Symington from Fort Lafayette, N.Y. Browning, <i>Diary</i>; <a href="#">Order Concerning William N. Symington</a>, 27 December 1864, <i>CW</i>, 8:185.</p> <p>Writes John Maclean, president of College of New Jersey, Princeton, N.J.: "I have the honor to acknowledge the reception of your note of the 20th of December, conveying the announcement that the Trustees of the College of New Jersey have conferred upon me the Degree of Doctor of Laws." <a href="#">Abraham Lincoln to John Maclean</a>, 27 December 1864, <i>CW</i>, 8:183-84.</p>

## Lincoln, Abraham,

**Lincoln, Abraham**, accepted the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws from Princeton in 1864 shortly after his reelection to a second term. The degree was conferred at a meeting of the trustees on December 20th of that year, and President Maclean wrote to Lincoln the same day to inform him of their action. The reply, in Lincoln's own handwriting, is one of the University's treasured possessions -- "among the title deeds to our Americanism," as Dean Gauss once put it. The letter is as follows:

``Executive Mansion  
Washington, December 27, 1864

My Dear Sir:

I have the honour to acknowledge the reception of your note of the 20th of December, conveying the announcement that the Trustees of the College of New Jersey have conferred upon me the Degree of Doctor of Laws.

The assurance conveyed by this high compliment, that the course of the government which I represent has received the approval of a body of gentlemen of such character and intelligence in this time of public trial, is most grateful to me.

Thoughtful men must feel that the fate of civilization upon this continent is involved in the issue of our contest. Among the most gratifying proofs of this conviction is the hearty devotion everywhere exhibited by our schools and colleges to the national cause.

I am most thankful if my labors have seemed to conduce to the preservation of those institutions under which alone we can expect good government and in its train sound learning and the progress of the liberal arts.

I am, sir, very truly  
Your obedient servant  
A. LINCOLN

Dr. John Maclean

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From Alexander Leitch, *A Princeton Companion*, copyright Princeton University Press (1978).

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hundred either owned or inscribed by, among others, Henry James, H. G. Wells, Norman Douglas, Katherine Mansfield, John Galsworthy, Ford Madox Ford, Max Beerbohm and T. E. Lawrence. Stephen Crane's first novel, *Maggie, A Girl of the Streets*, 1893, is signed by the author and inscribed by him to L. S. Linson. The copy of Shaw's *The Doctor's Dilemma*, 1911, originally belonged to Beerbohm, who on facing preliminary pages sketched two portraits of the author in pencil. *Ulysses* is inscribed by Joyce to John Middleton Murry on publication day, April 27, 1922, and *Sons and Lovers* is inscribed by Lawrence to Katherine Mansfield and John Middleton Murry. W. H. Auden's first book, *Poems*, privately printed by hand by Stephen Spender in 1928 during a summer vacation, once belonged to the novelist William Plomer and is autographed by him on the front wrapper. The treasures of the Samuels library will long continue to reveal their significance to the bibliographer and scholar.

As the Library moved into the 1980s, the Friends Endowed Fund reached its goal, and, as specified, the income was to be used to acquire important printed and manuscript rarities. Mention of several significant acquisitions will indicate the positive effect that the Fund has had on the Library's collections. American literary holdings have been enhanced by the acquisition of one of the six recorded copies of James Fenimore Cooper's *The Water Witch*, published in Dresden in 1830s, along with a leaf from the original manuscript; and of corrected typewritten manuscripts of Tennessee Williams's four plays, *Battle of Angels*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *Summer and Smoke*. Along with the original pen drawings by Evelyn Waugh for *Black Mischief*, the poetry notebooks of Louis MacNeice stand out among the English literary acquisitions. Most recent of the acquisitions made possible by the Fund is the series of 121 drawings by Randolph Caldecott for Washington Irving's Christmas stories.

In recent years the research resources have continued to strengthen in our major collecting areas. The growth of the archival collections has focused strongly on the social sciences and the humanities, and acquisitions have included the papers of William Russell Grace, Community Service Society, George D. Woods, Charles Evans Hughes, Ruth Nanda Anshen, the August Belmont family and Arthur Symons. Among smaller, but significant, groups of manuscripts are the diaries of Hester Lynch Piozzi, the letters and poetry manuscripts of Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon, and the literary manuscripts of Virgil Thomson. Also transferred to the Library's administration during this period have been the Herbert H. Lehman Papers and the extensive holdings of the Bakhmeteff Archive of Russian and East European History and Culture.

Book collections added during recent years have included the Frederic Rolfe, Baron Corvo, collection formed by Stuart B. Schimmel, the Benjamin Disraeli collection assembled by William B. Liebmann, and the important group of English first editions and association books received from Eleanor Tilton, including the extraordinary copy of Anthony Trollope's *Sir Harry Hotspur of Humblethwaite* inscribed by the author to George Eliot, "the first living English novelist." In 1980 the Library received the Aaron W. Berg bequest of nearly five hundred first editions, a print collection comprising forty etchings and lithographs, primarily by American artists, and an endowment, the income from which will provide for the annual purchase of rare editions and manuscripts of American and British authors. The gifts of Ruth Ulmann Samuel over a fifteen year period and the bequest received in 1980 established a fund to provide for the acquisition of illustrated books in memory of her father Albert Ulmann.

Donors have continued to enrich the collections by their generous gifts of important single items. The oil portrait of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu painted by Sir Godfrey Kneller, ca. 1715, has been presented by Robert Halsband. The Chew family of Philadelphia has added to the Historical Map Collection the renowned 1768 map by Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon that marked the conclusion of one of the most famous boundary disputes in American history. The letter written by President Abraham Lincoln to President Charles King on June 26, 1861, acknowledging the University's honorary degree conferred upon him, was presented by the family of the Scottish historian and lawyer, A. R. B. Haldane.

Though the history of the collections begins with the founding of the institution, it was not until the present century that the growth of publishing and the ensuing proliferation of printed and manuscript records reached the seemingly overwhelming numbers whose organization and preservation have become the special responsibilities

public service.

### **Elizabeth Hayford**

Elizabeth Hayford has served as president of the Associated Colleges of the Midwest (ACM) since 1984, after having served as vice president for academic programs at the ACM from 1981 to 1984. She supervises off-campus study programs and a large number of faculty and curricular development activities. She has directed ACM grants from both national foundations and federal agencies.

Hayford previously worked as an associate of the Yale-China Association at The Chinese University of Hong Kong (1978-81); associate dean/assistant dean of arts and sciences at Oberlin College (1972-1978); director of Judaic and Near Eastern studies at Oberlin (1977-78); resident director of the Great Lakes Colleges Association Japan Study Program (1974-75); and research and editorial assistant at Bunting Institute in Cambridge, Massachusetts (1964-65).

Hayford has taught at Oberlin College, Waseda University in Japan, Case Western Reserve University; and the University of Lowell, in Massachusetts. She has consulted on international education and served on review panels for the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Security Education Program. Hayford holds a doctorate in history from Tufts University, a master's in regional studies from Harvard University and a bachelor's degree from Radcliffe College.

### **About Knox College**

Founded in 1837, Knox is a national liberal arts college in Galesburg, Illinois, with students from 46 states and 41 nations. Knox's "Old Main" is a National Historic Landmark and the only building remaining from the 1858 Lincoln-Douglas debates. Founded by a religious colony from upstate New York, Knox graduated its first class in 1846 -- nine men -- five who went into the ministry, an attorney, a college professor, a journalist and a physician. The first black U.S. Senator, Hiram Revels, attended Knox in 1857-58, and the first black college graduate in Illinois, Barnabus Root, graduated from Knox in 1870.

Barack Obama is the fourth U.S. Senator from Illinois to be awarded an honorary degree from Knox. Paul Simon was awarded an honorary doctorate in 1987, Charles Percy in 1973 and Paul Douglas in 1952.

Knox also awarded an honorary degree to an unsuccessful candidate for the U.S. Senate from Illinois -- Abraham Lincoln, who was honored in 1860, prior to his election as President. Lincoln had lost the 1858 senatorial election to Stephen Douglas, following the series of debates -- one of which was held at Knox -- that catapulted Lincoln to national prominence.

The doctorate awarded to Lincoln was the first honorary degree given in Knox's history, and the first educational degree of any kind for Lincoln. In announcing the degree, Knox trustee Orville H. Browning, himself a U.S. Senator from 1861 to 1863, jokingly advised Lincoln to "...consider yourself a 'scholar,' as well as a 'gentleman,' and deport yourself accordingly."



 E-MAIL THIS PAGE

Degrees Received by Abraham Lincoln

Knox College, July <sup>4</sup>/~~2~~, 1860 LL.D.

Columbia College (now Columbia University), <sup>June 26</sup>~~April 1~~, 1861 LL.D.

College of New Jersey (now Princeton University) Dec. 20, 1864 LL.D.

see Boston 12/27/64

see Lincoln  
Day by Day

# Honorary Degrees for 5,000: Motives as Varied as Schools

By EDWARD B. FISKE

James E. Burke, the chairman of Johnson & Johnson, bowed his head before the 9,100 graduates of Rutgers University Thursday as the university registrar and gonfalonier placed an academic hood with a scarlet lining and white trim around his shoulders.

The scarlet symbolizes Rutgers and the white represents arts, letters and humanities. The ritual meant Mr. Burke possessed an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree for being an "astute entrepreneur and energetic proponent of corporate civic duty."

Mr. Burke's is one of an estimated 5,000 honorary degrees being awarded

by colleges and universities around the country this commencement season, perpetuating a tradition almost as old as higher education itself.

The degrees are viewed not only as a means of honoring high achievement but also of providing role models for students, publicity for the institution and encouragement of fields in which it specializes.

The way a college hands out honorary degrees, said Eli Schwartz, who headed the committee on these awards at Lehigh University in Pennsylvania, "says a lot about an institution and what it's trying to strive for in its character and quality."

Most institutions have a policy of only awarding degrees in person. Wesleyan University in Connecticut, has departed from this policy twice for people who were ill. Columbia University, in New York City, has hewed to the rule, but it has sometimes done the traveling itself. Michael I. Sovern, the university president, went to South Africa in 1982 to bestow one on Bishop Desmond Tutu of Lesotho, whose passport had been revoked for political reasons. University officials had bestowed degrees on a shirt-sleeved Abraham Lincoln at the White House in 1861 and on Justice William O. Douglas at the Supreme Court in 1979.

**COLLEGE DEGREES FOR  
PRESIDENTS.**

Accounts of the conferring of the LL.D. degree on President ROOSEVELT by Yale emphasize the fact that the only previous President to receive that degree from Yale in person was the other ROOSEVELT. As a matter of fact, the names of eight other Presidents figure in the university's honorary list, but most of them (WASHINGTON, JOHN ADAMS, THOMAS JEFFERSON, WILLIAM H. TAFT, WOODROW WILSON and HERBERT HOOVER) received the degree long before becoming President. Except for the ROOSEVELTS, only Presidents HAYES and MCKINLEY received it during their Presidential term.

It is probable that, if the full record were at hand, it would be found that virtually all of our thirty-two Chief Executives have been thus distinguished; if eminence in personal achievement happened to be lacking (as it unhappily did with numerous occupants of the White House), State pride and the numerous institutions of learning would have seen to it. But the other large universities share with Yale the record of having conferred honorary degrees on comparatively few Presidents in office. Princeton has nine or ten Presidential names on its list, but only three were thus distinguished during the official term. Harvard's list is, in number and eminence, perhaps the most striking of all; yet, of the eleven Presidential names which appear on Harvard's list, only five received the distinction during their official term:

WASHINGTON became a Harvard Doctor of Laws in 1776, JEFFERSON in 1787, and JOHN QUINCY ADAMS, TAFT, WILSON and HOOVER received their honorary diplomas years before their election to the Presidency. The college enumeration gives only MONROE, JACKSON, GRANT, HAYES and THEODORE ROOSEVELT as recipients of Harvard's degree during their terms of office. One highly interesting fact in the record is that ABRAHAM LINCOLN, although in 1864 he became a Princeton LL. D., had already received that degree from Knox College before he was even nominated for the Presidency.



## *Knox College First to Bestow Degree on Lincoln*

GALESBURG, Ill., Feb. 12 (A.P.).—Events surrounding the awarding of an honorary LL.D. degrees to Abraham Lincoln by Knox College in 1860 were recounted today by Prof. R. C. Whitford in Lincoln Memorial chapel services at the college.

"Knox" he said, "was the first college to honor itself by bestowing an honorary degree on this great American.

"Distinctions of other honorary alumni dwindled in comparison with him."

**Columbia  
Follows**

A year passes, a year in which giant forces seem to shake the earth and tend to change the destiny of whole nations. A. Lincoln, LL. D., so much better known as the "Rail Splitter Candidate," is elected to the Presidency of the United States, and immediately the smoldering fires of dissension burst into flames, engulfing the entire nation.

With one exception, every President from Washington to Roosevelt has received at least one honorary degree. The one exception was William H. Harrison, who was in the White House only about a month. So it is not surprising that Lincoln's prominence should be recognized by another outstanding college. In the Minutes of the Board of Trustees of Columbia College (now Columbia University) can be found this record: "At a meeting of

I have the honor to acknowledge the reception of your note of the 29th of December, conveying the announcement that the Trustees of the College of New Jersey have conferred upon me the Degree of Doctor of Laws.

The assurance conveyed by this high compliment, that the course of the government which I represent has received the approval of a body of gentlemen of such character and intelligence in this time of public trial, is most grateful to me.

Thoughtful men must feel that the fate of civilization upon this continent is involved in the issue



