



ABRAHAM LINCOLN PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY & MUSEUM

For Immediate Release:

January 26, 2006

Contact: Jill Burwitz (ALPLM)
(217) 558-8970 office
(217) 299-6165 cell

Local railroad company donates rare oil paintings depicting Lincoln's life to the ALPLM

Paintings featured in temporary exhibit "Mr. Lincoln's Attic"

SPRINGFIELD, IL: Springfield-based Illinois & Midland Railroad Inc., a Genesee & Wyoming company, has donated 20 oil paintings to the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum. The paintings date back to the early 1930's, when William C. Hurst, then president of the railroad company, ordered twenty-five specially commissioned oil paintings to be used for the company's corporate calendar. Abraham Lincoln in rustic garb may not be the obvious pin-up material for some people's calendars, but for Hurst, the "homely events" of Lincoln's early years in the New Salem vicinity were just what he wanted for his company's annual gift calendars for employees and customers. His successor as president, Fred L. Schrader, continued the tradition until the series came to an end with the 1955 calendar.

"Lincoln has long seized the imagination of American artists, among them some of the country's most celebrated illustrators during the middle part of the 20th century," said Richard Norton Smith, Executive Director of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum. "Thanks to the Illinois and Midland Railroad, a unique collection of Lincoln images will be showcased in our new exhibit, and forever preserved as part of our collections."

On Saturday, January 28, at 11:00 a.m., Illinois & Midland Railroad executives, Mr. Spencer D. White and Ms. Raquel Swan, will officially donate the paintings to the ALPLM in a brief ceremony in the Illinois Gallery, where the paintings are on display for the ALPLM's new exhibit *Mr. Lincoln's Attic*.

History of the Illinois & Midland Railroad calendar art:

Historians

(1932-1947) Paul M. Angle was the historical consultant on the first 16 calendars. He was secretary of the Abraham Lincoln Association and Director of the Illinois State Historical Library at the time the series started, and was Secretary and Director of the Chicago Historical Society at the time his involvement ended. Some of his more well-known books include *"Here I Have Lived": A History of Lincoln's Springfield* (1935), *The Lincoln Reader* (1947), and *Bloody Williamson: A Chapter in American Lawlessness* (1952).

(1948-1955) Jay Monaghan was the historical consultant on the last 8 calendars. He was Illinois State Historian when he succeeded Angle on the calendar series. He was Consultant over Lincolniana collections at the University of California Library when the series ended in 1955. He wrote many books, including *Diplomat in Carpet Slippers: Abraham Lincoln Deals with Foreign Affairs* (1945), *The Overland Trail* (1947), and *Civil War on the Western Border, 1854-1865* (1955).

Artists

(1931-1944) Fletcher Ransom painted the first 14 pictures for the calendar series. An Illinois native educated at the Art Institute of Chicago and the Academy of Fine Arts in New York City, Ransom started out as an illustrator for *Colliers* and *Youth Companion*, and became nationally-renowned as a magazine illustrator. In his later years he used a barn in back of his Springfield rooming house as his painting studio.

(1945-1947) Lane K. Newberry painted the next 3 pictures for the calendar series. Lane, a Chicago-based artist with an international reputation for illustration, was already famous for his renderings of historic buildings including a popular series of paintings depicting historic Mormon structures at Nauvoo in rural western Illinois.

(1948-1955) Reynolds Jones painted the last 8 pictures for the calendar series. Jones grew up in Springfield, graduating from Springfield High School and creating window cards for local department stores before attending the American Academy of Art in Chicago. He became a commercial artist working for the Music Corporation of America and providing illustrations for advertisements and magazines. He later moved to New Mexico and became famous for his artistic renderings of cowboy life, western wildlife, and horses.

###

[<< Back to Press Releases](#)