

Max Bachman's Lincolns¹

by

D. Leigh Henson, Ph.D.



Lincoln. Copyrighted
2514B Height 7 ft. 2 in. \$100.00

The pose in B and C is modelled after that of the St. Gaudens' Lincoln in Lincoln Park, Chicago.
The heads are those of the busts Nos. 5394 and 5395, by Max Bachmann, considered by leading authorities to be the finest likeness of Lincoln ever produced in sculpture.
Tiffany & Co. and The Gorham Co. of New York purchased the right to reproduce these busts in bronze.



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Catalogue of the P.P. Caproni and Brother Co. (1911), page 40.
From the Web site of the Giust Gallery, Woburn, MA.

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Darold Leigh Henson, Ph.D.

Max Bachman(n) (1862—1921) was an architectural stone carver and sculptor; his work included statues and busts of Abraham Lincoln and sculpture of native Americans. According to the Smithsonian Institution Research Information System (SIRIS), Bachman sculpted a bust of Sinte Maza (Iron Tail), an Oglala Sioux who fought alongside Sitting Bull at the Battle of the Little Big Horn. The SIRIS site also attributes a statue of Christ as a child, *The Son of Man*, to Bachman, but its location is unknown. Bachman created two strikingly realistic renditions of Lincoln: one with beard, one without. Both renditions exist in larger-than-life statues. Busts also exist of Bachman's Lincoln with and without a beard. Bachman's Lincoln busts and statues have been duplicated and offered at reasonable cost. Thus, these Lincoln figures can be found in schools, public libraries, museums, and courthouses, including the Logan County Courthouse in Lincoln, IL. As this article explains, Bachman's Lincoln work has significance for both national art history and local history.

Max Bachman, born in 1862 in Brunswick, Germany, was educated in the Royal Academy of Berlin. In 1885 he emigrated to the United States and in 1895 married the sculptor Eleanor May Brown, who studied with him. He moved in the art circles of Boston, Philadelphia, and New York because of his diverse interests and talents as an actor, musician, cartoonist, painter, and sculptor. One unique aspect of his work is that he did satirical sculpture.

Bachman's figures on the New York World Building (demolished in 1955), representing Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, were large structures that supported its cornices. Bachman is also recognized for his carvings on the façade on the entryway of the historic International Trust Company Building in Boston. Those carvings include figures of commerce, fidelity, industry, and security. Another commission requiring twenty figures of "heroic size" was for one of the campuses of the Massachusetts State Normal School.

Curiously, Bachman's obituary in the *New York Times* of January 15, 1921, is brief and gives no indication of his work on Lincoln: "Max Bachmann, a sculptor, whose first important work was the designing of the allegorical figures of the continents for the Pulitzer Building [also known as The New York World Building] on Park Row [New York City] in 1890, died of pneumonia in Bellevue Hospital."



The only portrait found in this research on Bachman was a newspaper drawing. Image from the Boston Daily Globe, January 7, 1894, p. 20.

A testimony to the high quality of Bachman's Lincoln work is a citation in the 1951 classic *He Belongs to the Ages: The Statues of Abraham Lincoln* by Donald Charles Durman. That citation is for Bachman's bronze statue of Lincoln on Victory Memorial Drive in Minneapolis, MN. One reason this statue is remarkable is that it combines the work of two sculptors. The Web site of the Victory Neighborhood Association explains: "in 1929, the 125 surviving members of the ten Minnesota units of the Grand Army of the Republic (out of the original 3,000 members) raised the money to construct a statue of Abraham Lincoln in the center of the Grand Army Circle. The body of the statue was a replica of the famous statue by Augustus St. Gaudens [*sic*] of Lincoln in Chicago. The head was modeled by Max Bachman."

Unveiled in Chicago's Lincoln Park in 1887, Saint-Gaudens' *Standing Lincoln* is world renowned for its realism. According to Carl Volkman, Saint-Gaudens [1848—1907] "was the first sculptor to use the life mask of Lincoln and the casts of his hands made by Leonard Volk before Lincoln became president." William H. Herndon, Lincoln's long-time law partner, provided a detailed description of Lincoln's oratorical posture and gestures, praising Saint-Gaudens' *Standing Lincoln* for its accuracy in depicting Lincoln the orator: "the designer of the monument recently erected in Chicago has happily caught him [Lincoln] in just this [speaking] attitude."



May 25, 1930, dedication of the Bachman/Saint-Gaudens Lincoln statue on Victory Memorial Drive, Minneapolis, MN. From the Web site of the Victory Neighborhood Association.

An obvious question concerns how the Lincoln head of Saint-Gaudens is similar to and different from that of Bachman's Lincoln. The Saint-Gaudens' Lincoln is bearded, although the Volk life mask used by Saint-Gaudens is not. Bachman's Lincoln head in the Victory Memorial Drive statue appears to be beardless. An investigation of this possible difference reveals that, in fact, Bachman sculpted Lincoln with and without a beard. Evidence of the two Bachman Lincoln portrayals is found on the second half of page 40 in the *Catalogue of the P.P. Caproni and Brother* (1911). P.P. Caproni and Brother of Boston, MA, produced and marketed two larger-than-life Bachman Lincoln statues: No. 2514B shows Lincoln with beard; No. 2514C shows him beardless. The height of both statues was 7', 2"; each was sold for \$100.00. The catalog also notes that "Tiffany & Co. and The Gorham Co. of New York purchased the right to reproduce these busts in bronze."



The pose in B and C is modelled after that of the St. Gaudens' Lincoln in Lincoln Park, Chicago. The heads are those of the busts Nos. 5394 and 5395, by Max Bachmann, considered by leading authorities to be the finest likeness of Lincoln ever produced in sculpture. Tiffany & Co. and The Gorham Co. of New York purchased the right to reproduce these busts in bronze.



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From the Web site of the Giust Gallery, Woburn, MA.**

The Web site of the Giust Gallery of Woburn, MA, explains the work of Pietro P. Caproni (1862—1928): "Florentine master craftsman Pietro Caproni practiced the art of creating quality reproductions. During the last two decades of the 19th century, he traveled through Europe making molds directly from masterpieces in museums such as the Louvre, the National Museum in Athens, the Vatican, the Uffizi Gallery, and the British Museum. Considered the greatest craftsman of his time, Caproni was one of the last to be allowed the freedom of casting directly from museum pieces."

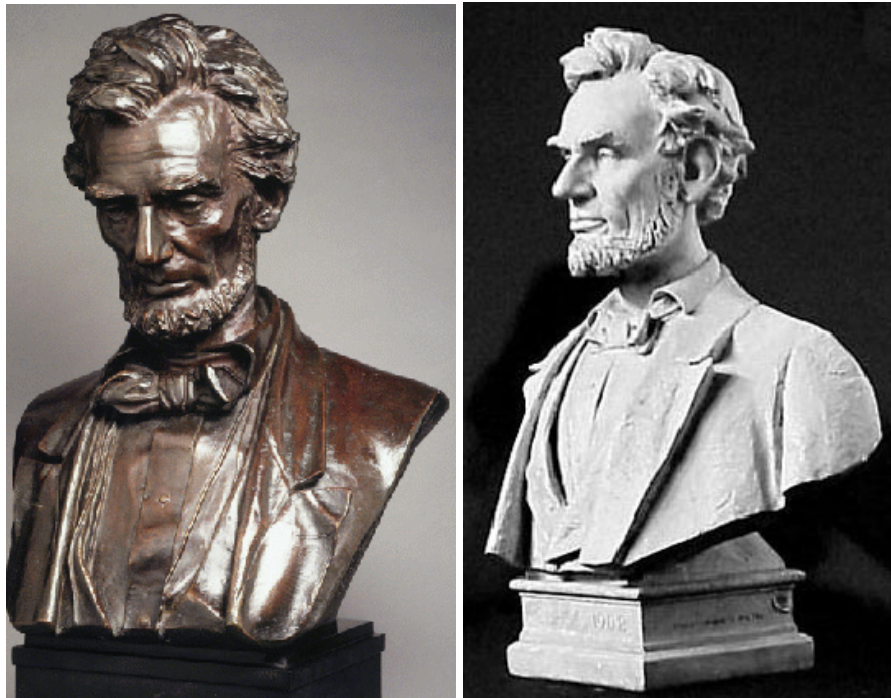
"In 1900 Pietro Caproni constructed the Caproni Gallery building, at 1920 Washington Street in Boston, to cast and house his reproductions. He made them available to museums, schools, and

private connoisseurs through an illustrated catalogue which listed over 2500 casts, including such extraordinary pieces as the full-size Winged Victory of Samothrace and Michelangelo's head of David. The Caproni Gallery became the leading art gallery of its kind in the world."

"Some of Caproni's original molds survived to the present day, and many of his catalogues can still be found in the great libraries of this country. His methods, too, have survived, as the Caproni tradition of a fine sense of artistry was carefully passed down to the hands of his successor. The long tradition of craftsmanship continues at the Giust Gallery. Today, the Giust Gallery integrates these old trade secrets with extensive knowledge of modern materials. Our craftsmen are artists in their own right and are carefully trained to hand cast and custom finish each piece to recreate the feeling of the originals themselves."

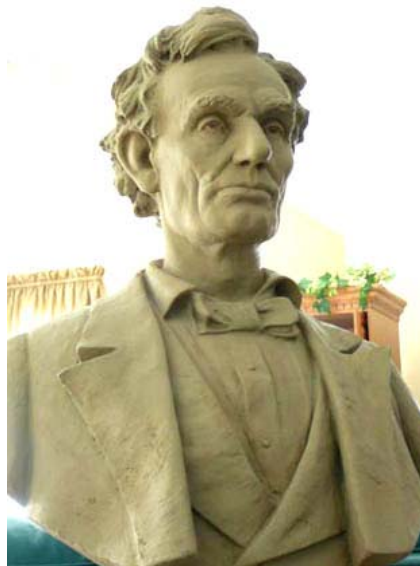
According to the Wikipedia article titled "Pietro Caproni" (which has some source citations), between 1892 and 1927 Pietro and his brother, Emilio, "supplied art schools, major universities and museums in the United States and abroad with quality reproductions. These plaster cast reproductions were, in an era before commercial photography, an integral educational tool in teaching people the history of art and antiquities. Rising sculptors of the time sought the expertise of the Caproni studios when creating some of the country's best known civic sculpture. Among them was Cyrus Edwin Dallin, whose *Appeal to the Great Spirit* and *Paul Revere* were modeled in the Caproni studios' basement and are standing in Boston. Other known artists who worked with the Caproni brothers include Daniel Chester French, Loreda Taft, and Leonard Craske." The Capronis installed collections of their work at Harvard University, Yale University, Princeton University, Cornell University, and the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. The question remains as to what extent there was mutual financial benefit between the Capronis and the sculptors who collaborated with them.

The bearded Lincoln busts by Saint-Gaudens and Bachman show significant differences. The Saint-Gaudens' Lincoln head is somewhat downcast, suggesting a pensive mood. The Bachman bust shows Lincoln looking straight ahead; and the eyebrows, nose, and chin appear angular, suggesting fearless determination.



At left is an Augustus Saint-Gaudens' bust of Abraham Lincoln, 1922, modeled from his Standing Lincoln. The bust is bronze, 28 x 17 x 14 in. (71.1 x 43.2 x 35.6 cm). From the Web site of the Brooklyn Museum.

At right is a Max Bachman bearded Lincoln bust, dated 1902 on the base, from the Pietro P. Caproni Collection. Presently in the Modern Collection of the Giust Gallery, #204, height 31 1/2," offered with suggested bronze or white patina finish. From the Web Site of the Giust Gallery.



Max Bachman's beardless Lincoln bust (1905) allegedly based on a Hesler photo, fabricated by P.P. Caproni & Brother. From the Web site of the Smithsonian Institution Research Information System (SIRIS).

In *Lincoln: A Pictorial History*, Paul Gleason identifies the beardless Abraham Lincoln statue in the rotunda of the Logan County Courthouse in Lincoln, IL, as the work of Max Bachman. Mr. Gleason notes that this statue was dedicated on June 21, 1939, and was a gift from the Lincoln Rotary and Kiwanis clubs. It has since occasionally been a touchstone for local civic pride and patriotism.

This Bachman Lincoln statue was prominently featured in a 1944 manuscript exhibition titled "Abe Lincoln in Illinois and in the City of Lincoln." In the corresponding photo, the exhibit case in front of the Lincoln statue contained an original manuscript of the Gettysburg Address. Viewing the statue's head in this photo with a magnifying glass reveals a slight dimple in the middle of the chin and protruding eyebrows.



Photo from the WLS Family Album, 1944, published by Prairie Farmer of Chicago.

The *WLS Family Album, 1944*, photo depicts WLS's Dinnerbell program broadcasting the opening ceremonies of the exhibit while it was briefly in Lincoln. To the right of the microphone is Arthur C. Page, associate editor of *Prairie Farmer*. The tall man behind and to the right of Mr. Page is Vernon Nickell, the State of Illinois Superintendent of Public Instruction. Mr. Nickell arranged the exhibit. The *WLS Family Album* does not identify the others, including the African-American, but this writer can identify some of them: local educational administrators E.H. Lukenbill (third from left, an Abraham Lincoln buff and inspiration to this writer), Harry O. Augspurger (fourth from left), and W.C. "Ziggy" Handlin (seventh from left).

The person standing next to the state trooper is D.F. Nickols, a local school administrator and Lincoln researcher, who (along with historian Lawrence B. Stringer) tried unsuccessfully to prevent Henry Ford from removing the original Postville Courthouse from Lincoln in 1929. Mr. Nickols was also co-author of *Mentor Graham: the Man Who Taught Lincoln* (1944).

The photo below shows the first U.S. Army volunteers and draftees of Logan County in 1944. Their pose with Bachman's Lincoln statue in the Logan County Courthouse suggests their patriotism.



*E. Darold Henson, the author's father and a WWII Purple Heart recipient, is at far left, back row.
Photo from the Lincoln Courier, January, 1944.*

Below is a contemporary photo of Bachman's Lincoln statue in the Logan County Courthouse rotunda. The artist who painted this statue and the date of the painting are unknown. Realistic painted statues of Lincoln are uncommon. Most of them are peculiar figures, for example, the 70+-foot statue of Lincoln (allegedly the world's tallest) near Ashmore, IL, and Carl W. Rinnus's celebrated 30-foot fiberglass *Abraham Lincoln, The Railsplitter*, just inside the main entrance to the Illinois State Fairgrounds in Springfield.

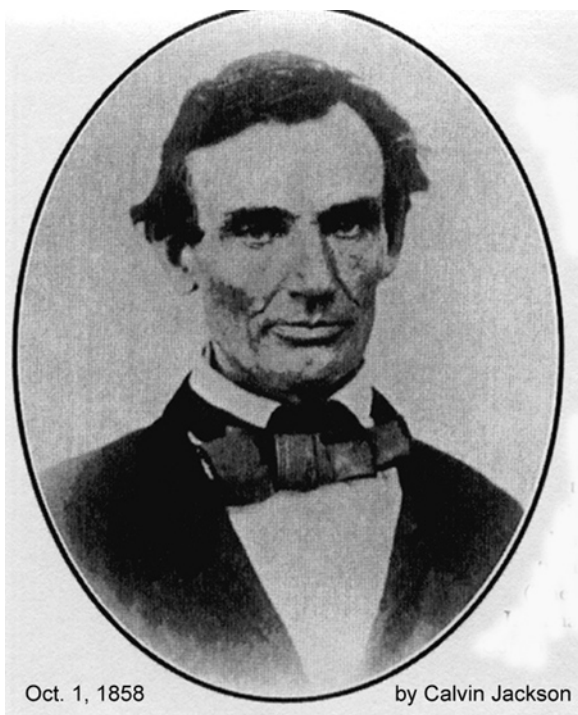


Photo courtesy of Patricia Hartman.

This particular Lincoln statue by Bachman is especially appropriate for Lincoln, IL, because in all but one of Abraham Lincoln's visits there he was beardless. In 1853 Abraham Lincoln, age 44, was the attorney for the town's founders, and he agreed to their request to name the town after him, although legend says he warned them that nothing named Lincoln ever amounted to anything. Also, according to legend, Lincoln christened the town with watermelon juice on the first day lots were publicly sold. This town is the only one named for Lincoln before he became famous. There, he owned property, practiced law, and engaged in politics. In July of 1858 while in Lincoln, IL, as he traveled between Springfield and Bloomington, Abraham Lincoln first met Leonard Volk and agreed to pose for a life mask.

Again, that famous mask captures Lincoln without a beard. Lincoln's most significant appearance in his first namesake town was to deliver a two-hour political speech on the Logan County Courthouse steps on October 16, 1858, the day after the last Lincoln-Douglas debate.

One of only two known photos of Abraham Lincoln taken during the Lincoln-Douglas debates is a likely source that Bachman referred to in creating his beardless Lincoln statue. The photo below by Calvin Jackson on October 1, 1858, just before the fifth debate (at Galesburg), shows remarkable similarities to the head and shoulders of Bachman's Lincoln. The photo is taken from *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates: The First Complete, Unexpurgated Text*, ed. Harold Holzer (Fordham University Press, 2004).



Oct. 1, 1858

by Calvin Jackson



Max Bachman's Logan County Courthouse Lincoln

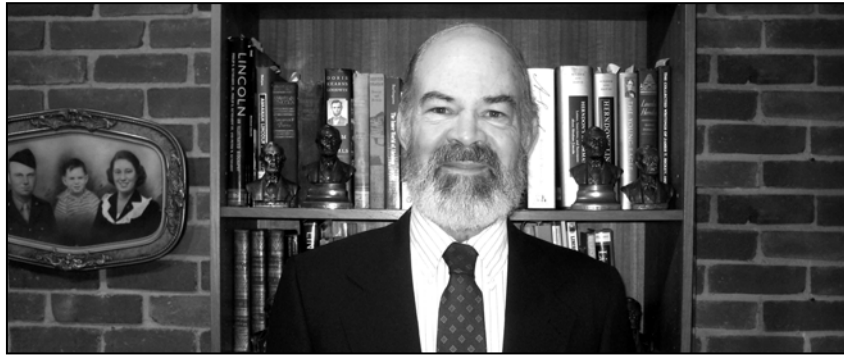
The only documented appearance of Abraham Lincoln with a beard in his first namesake town was on November 21, 1860. Then, as President-elect traveling to Chicago to meet his Vice-president-elect, Hannibal Hamlin, Lincoln spoke briefly from the back of a train. The early beard growth of Lincoln at that time is depicted by the photo taken in Chicago by Samuel G. Alschuler on November 25, 1860. The funeral train of the bearded fallen President also stopped briefly in Lincoln, IL, in the early morning of May 3, 1865, on its way to Springfield.

The wide distribution of Max Bachman's bearded and beardless Lincoln busts and statues, through the collaborative, enterprising work of the Caproni brothers, increases the likelihood that additional Lincoln statues and busts by Bachman may be located. For example, only last year was documentation developed for the Bachman beardless Lincoln bust pictured in this article. That bust had been in an Iowa school for many years. The prospect of discovering other Bachman sculpture in public buildings suggests that more stories of local history may thus remain to be told.

About the Author

Darold Leigh Henson was born (1942) and raised in Lincoln, Illinois. He graduated from Lincoln Community High School (LCHS) in 1960. After attending Lincoln College his freshman year (1960—1961), he earned a bachelor's degree from Illinois State University with an English major and history minor. He taught English at Pekin Community High School for thirty years (1964—1994), and during that time he earned a master's in American literature and Ph.D. in English studies, both from Illinois State. Also during his Pekin years, he taught freshman composition part time at Illinois Central College for several semesters. In the mid-1980s he was a part-time writing consultant and freelance writer and editor whose clients included local engineering firms and Caterpillar Inc. [*sic*]. From 1990 to 1993 he was a founding partner of Technical Publication Associates, Inc. Beginning in 1994 he taught technical and marketing communication in the English Department of Missouri State University until becoming professor emeritus in 2006 and then taught online for two more years. His articles about the theory, practice, and teaching of writing have appeared in

several academic journals. In recent years he has been a member of the Illinois State Historical Society. His article on the social-cultural history of the town of Lincoln as seen in William Maxwell's writings and his article on Mr. Lincoln's 1858 namesake town rally-speech were published in the *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*. He has begun research on a book titled *The Rhetorical Education and Development of Abraham Lincoln Before His Presidency*. Henson is blessed that Patricia Hartman is his wife. By a previous marriage, he has two wonderful children, Kendra Henson and Brandon Henson; and they are much interested in their Lincoln roots. Henson's hobbies include boating, fishing, and visiting historic sites in Illinois.



D. Leigh Henson

Access his Lincoln community history Web site at <http://findinglincolnillinois.com>.