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Special Report: The "Kaplan Lincoln"

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Special Report

The “Kaplan Lincoln”

Preface

A few miles south of Hodgenville, Kentucky, along U.S. Route 31E, is the Lincoln Birthplace National Historical Site. Located atop a hill above the sheltered Sinking Springs, and accessible by a climb of 56 steps that signify the honored man’s brief lifespan, yet interminable on a hot, humid summer day, stands an opulent marble and granite edifice adorned with Doric columns. Inside the building, residing in air-conditioned comfort, is a simple log cabin, constructed of white oak beams, that may or may not be the building in which Abraham Lincoln was born. This diminutive, crude structure, hardly bigger than a shed, projects such a strong image of humility and reverence that the authenticity of the materials does not seem to matter much.

Several hundred miles north and west of Hodgenville, near a combined section of Illinois Routes 97 and 123 south of Petersburg, stands the New Salem State Historical Site. This park, an oasis of green stillness close to the Sangamon River, contains original site reconstructions of the log homes, stores, mills and shops that were present when Abraham Lincoln lived, worked, and studied there from 1831 to 1837. During this time Lincoln gained his reputation for honesty, industry, and conviction. A welcomed member of the community, he helped neighbors, split rails, and soundly defeated challengers in wrestling contests. At the Rutledge tavern where the young Lincoln swapped stories and read law books, he became acquainted and fell deeply in love with the owner’s daughter, Ann.

Less than a hundred miles east of New Salem, near Charleston, Illinois, is the Lincoln Log Cabin State Historical Site. On the grounds is a reconstruction of the two-room log home occupied by Lincoln’s father, Thomas, and his step-mother, Sarah, in 1840, and frequently visited by Abraham until he left for his inauguration in 1861. During those twenty years Lincoln’s career, from a circuit-riding lawyer to a largely unsuccessful candidate for various offices, moved slowly and haltingly before the presidential election of 1860. It was there that the son’s gradual transformation from a provincial backwoodsman to a

global statesman was noted by friends and family. It was also there that the younger Lincoln's anguish and grief could be witnessed: his prolonged bereavement over the death of his beloved Ann, his struggles with the moral and legal issues that divided his nation, and his constant doubts about his own worth and destiny.

As the 16th President of the United States, Lincoln served during the most divisive and turbulent time in that nation's history. Constantly ridiculed and generally disliked during his tenure, Lincoln nevertheless spoke and wrote with a timeless and universal elegance that has since revealed a person of extraordinary compassion, wisdom, and tolerance. Almost immediately after his assassination in 1865, his stature as a leader and as a human being has soared to such magnitude that his humanity is respected and admired throughout the world. Abraham Lincoln has become an international symbol of truth, equality, and the nobility of purpose. Lincoln is the embodiment of the best that can reside within the common man.

Any connection between Abraham Lincoln and forensic identification may appear tenuous. However, not long ago a large envelope was delivered to the office of the *Journal of Forensic Identification*. Inside was a folder containing various documents and photographs, but included no cover letter explaining the contents or their purpose. One item was a report written by Dr. Claude N. Frechette, while another was a three-page letter from Grant B. Romer and bearing the letterhead of the George Eastman House. One enclosed photograph was the familiar and unmistakable picture taken of Abraham Lincoln during his presidency. Two other photographs depicted much younger men.

Soon afterward a telephone call was received by the *Journal* from Mr. Albert Kaplan, the person who had provided the mysterious packet of information. He explained that he had submitted the material for possible publication by the *JFI*. During the course of the conversation, Mr. Kaplan revealed that neither the report nor the letter had ever been previously published.

Mr. Kaplan's submission is herein presented as an intriguing account of the efforts made to identify the individual represented in one of the photographs and to authenticate its source. Part One, written by Dr. Frechette, describes the comparative analysis of the individual using methods with forensic application. Part Two is the scientific examination performed by Mr. Romer of the actual daguerreotype - *Ed.*



The "Kaplan Lincoln"

Part One

A New Lincoln Image Report on an Unusual Study

Claude N. Frechette, M.D.

*American Hospital of Paris
Neuilly, France*

Introduction

In 1987, a print of an exceptionally high-quality, 19th-century daguerreotype of a robust, confident-looking, and smartly dressed young man was brought to my office in Paris on, interestingly, Lincoln's birthday, February 12. The owner of the daguerreotype, which had been purchased from a gallery in New York City in 1977, was Mr. Albert Kaplan, an American then residing in Paris. Mr. Kaplan was convinced, after years of personal research, that the young man pictured in the daguerreotype was Abraham Lincoln. He had sought me out to subject his conviction to the science of my medical specialty.

This daguerreotype, referred to as the Kaplan, dates from the early 1840s [1,2,3,4]. Born in 1809, Lincoln would have been in his early 30s. Hitherto, the earliest known photographic portrait of Abraham Lincoln, known as the Meserve #1, was made in 1848 when Lincoln was 39 years old (Figure 1) [5].

Numerous accounts have revealed that Lincoln underwent a dramatic change in his physical appearance beginning in January 1841 as a result of a grave emotional crisis [6]. This coincides with his reported failure to go through with his scheduled marriage to Mary Todd, leaving her literally waiting for him at the altar. (They were married the following year.) This emotional crisis, just one of a series of such

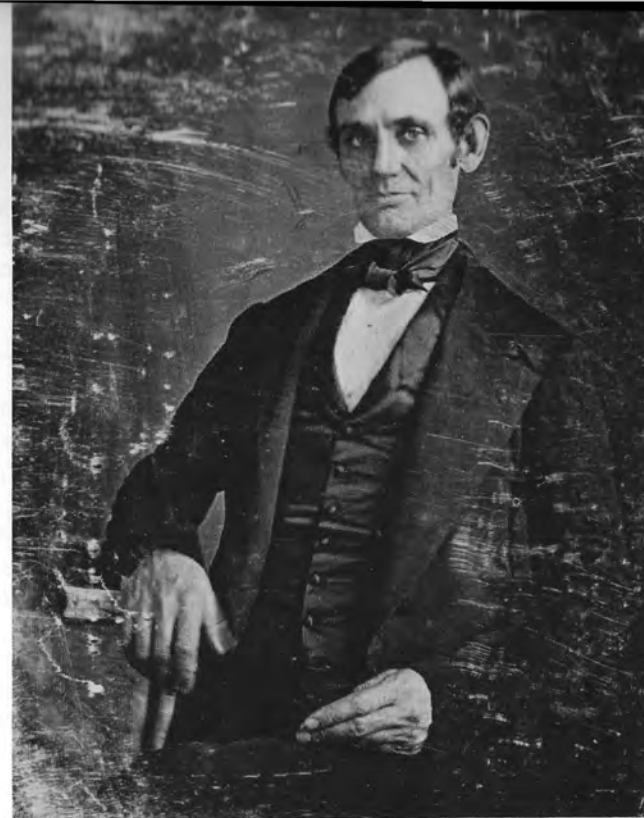


Figure 1

*Abraham Lincoln as photographed in 1848
(Meserve #1)*

episodes to plague him throughout his life, was the cause of Lincoln losing a considerable amount of weight [7].

Young Lincoln was known to be muscular and extremely powerful [8]. The older Lincoln was much thinner, and also prematurely aged by personal problems and the responsibility and anguish of the office he held during perhaps the greatest crisis the United States has ever undergone [9].

As a plastic and reconstructive surgeon, I examined the Kaplan based on my professional understanding of facial structure and aging. The most objective approach in examining a century-and-a-half old

image seemed to be that of a plastic surgeon who evaluates pre- and postoperative photographs and anthropomorphic data of patients with cranio-facial deformities.

The more I examined the image in the Kaplan and other Lincoln photographs, and studied the life of our 16th president, the more I came to believe that the Kaplan portrait was that of young Abraham Lincoln.

Material and Methods

Because this is what could be called a 150-year-old case, I obviously could not gather diagnostic data by using today's sophisticated medical technology and equipment. I relied on accounts by Lincoln's law partner, William H. Herndon, letters from family and contemporaries, biographical materials, personal revelations [8], papers by doctors on Lincoln's physical [9] and emotional problems [10], scores of Lincoln photographic portraits, as well as a copy of a life mask that originally was made just before Lincoln became president [11].

In the 107 likenesses of Lincoln that I studied, the point of focus, angle of pose, head inclination, magnification, and lighting were all different [12]. Distortion inherent in photography also had to be taken into account. The effects of weight-change, aging, and mental condition were duly noted.

I felt it would first be necessary to determine the parameters of the skeletal structure behind the face in the known images of Lincoln, so that comparisons could be made with the skeletal structure of the face in the Kaplan daguerreotype.

Anthropomorphic Analysis

An analysis of facial features using the canon of the vertical Golden Proportions appeared to be a valid approach to this unique project, because facial proportions can be determined mathematically [13]. An interesting and extensive discussion of this method is contained in the article "Divine Proportion in Facial Esthetics" by Robert M. Ricketts, M.D. [14]. Simply put, this canon is a basis for a system of mathematically developed proportions that have led to standard facial and cranial measurements enabling plastic, reconstructive, and orthodontic surgeons to use photographs to evaluate deviations from ideal, standard norms.



Figure 2

President Abraham Lincoln as photographed in 1862

Although a prerequisite set of standardized photographs of Lincoln does not exist, I thought that cardinal or outstanding facial features — lips, eyelids, etc. — could still be used as vertical reference points if they were easily recognizable, regardless of the angle of the pose [15,16,17,18].

The measured distance between these points would be proportionately accurate in a given portrait if realistic limits were pre-defined. Errors in measurement, even of the same photographic subject, would be impossible to avoid, given the subjective conditions of this retrospective study. Nonetheless, such errors could be expected to be small



Figure 3

compared with the gross differences that would be found in individuals having different facial structures.

Only 15 of the known images of Lincoln were finally selected for close scrutiny solely because their poses were similar to the one in the Kaplan in that they all featured the left side of the face. The scores of other Lincoln images that were excluded were rejected simply because they all featured the other side of Lincoln's face. Later in life, Lincoln preferred to have his right side photographed, whereas the Kaplan daguerreotype, like the Meserve #1 and the 1862 photograph shown in Figure 2, features his left side.

Six of the selected portraits showed Lincoln with a beard. They were, nevertheless, analyzed, because even though the chin could not correctly be pinpointed, the images could be used as a means of counter-checking the accuracy of the method used in locating the position of the central and upper facial features.

Each of the finally selected images was re-photographed and then enlarged or reduced to standardize interpupillary distance (Figure 3), thus removing at least one of the variables in the pursuit of increasing

accuracy. Each resulting print was approximately 21 cm x 16 cm, with interpupillary distance as close to 5.5 cm as possible.

The level of the eyes (LC) and the position of the lips (ST) were chosen as "known" reference points. The positions of the nose (LN) and chin (ME) were considered as "unknowns." ME was calculated from the distance LC-ST and LN measured from ME. In this way, the height of the lower and central segments of the face could be broken down to include the lower lip and chin (mandible), and the upper lip, cheek, and nose (maxilla).

LC was drawn as a line from the lateral-most (outer) limits of the sclera (the white of the eye) in both eyes. This served as a "horizontal" of the face as a whole to which other facial features could be oriented. ST was determined at the lowest point of the upper lip tubercle (the thickening in the middle of the upper lip). A short line was then drawn parallel to LC, and the distance between LC and ST measured with a caliper to the closest 1/100th of a centimeter. ME was then calculated from ST as the shorter distance (0.618) of the golden section, taking LC-ST as 1.000. Once ME was found, simple measurement located LN, since $LN - ME = LC - ST$. At this point, it was possible to verify all points using the calculations in Table 1.

I treated all 15 Lincoln photographs and the Kaplan daguerreotype in the same way. At least three measurements were made of each image and recorded on acetate sheets. The sheets were overlaid, and any differences were then measured and noted.

Facial Characteristics

In nearly all of Lincoln's photographs, he manifested bi-lateral ptosis (drooping of the upper eyelid), which is a rare congenital condition [19]. In addition, at the age of ten, Lincoln was kicked by a horse and sustained a major head trauma on the left side with a loss of consciousness [8]. As a result of this injury, Lincoln suffered from diplopia (double vision) [20] and exophoria (outward deviation) [21] of the left eye, both due to partial paralysis of small eye muscles. The results of this injury play a highly significant role in establishing the identity of the man in the Kaplan daguerreotype.

After examining the important life mask of Lincoln made in Chicago in 1860 by Leonard L. Volk, Dr. Edward J. Kempf reported in an April

Table 1

Calculations and measurements of the golden proportion of the face

Point	Measurement	Calculation
ME		if LC-ST=1.0 then ST-ME=0.618
LN	LC-ST= TR-LC= LN-NE	a) if TR-LC=0.618 then LC-ME=1.0 b) if LC-ST=0.618 then LC-LN=1.0

All points are verified using the following:

LC-ME=TR-LN	a) if LN-ME=0.618 then LN-TR=1.0
ME-ST=LC-LN	b) if LC-LN=1.0 then LN-ME=0.618 c) if LN-ST=1.0 then ST-ME=0.618 d) if ST-LN=1.0 then LN-LC=0.618

The trichion (TR) was not used in the present analysis since the upper forehead crease could not be defined.

1952 article [22] (summarizing a three-volume work) in the *American Medical Association Journal-Archives of Neurology and Psychiatry*, that he was able to identify a depressed skull fracture of the left frontal bone [23].

This serious injury, along with the aging process, with its inevitable sagging and loss of skin tone, aggravated the effects of the ptosis, especially in the injured left eye. This forced Lincoln to raise his left brow more and more as time went by.

Lincoln clearly had a unique face with a large forehead, a penetrating gaze, prominent cheek bones, a strong nose, and a well-outlined jaw. The moles on his face were also characteristic features. When he grew a beard in 1860, he presented a singular appearance: tall, gaunt, and filled with the look of "gloom and sadness." He was only 56 in 1865, the year of his assassination, but it was said he "looked 20 years older" [8].

Results

Anthropomorphic Analysis

The determinations of LN and ME were surprisingly accurate in all of the Lincoln images. The difference between the calculated position of ME and the visual assessment of this point was always less than 1 mm, or a mere 0.5% of the total length of the face. This, in my opinion, is well within the limits of error for a retrospective study of this type. Therefore, I felt that the method was valid, and would offer an important degree of scientific certainty if the same results were found in the Kaplan image.

When the same method was applied to the Kaplan (Figure 4), the same results were obtained. The relative distances LC-ST, ST-ME, and ME-LN were identical. I therefore concluded that the vertical dimensions of the mandible, maxilla, nose length, and the position of the orbits of the face shown in the Kaplan were the same as those of the face of Abraham Lincoln.

Facial Characteristics of the Kaplan Daguerreotype

A great number of similarities are readily seen, especially when each segment of the Kaplan image is examined separately. As will be pointed out later, a number of subtle details are not captured by prints made from the daguerreotype, but are clearly visible under loop magnification of the actual daguerreotype. (A characteristic of daguerreotypes is of significance here. The surface of a daguerreotype is covered with a thin film of a mercury compound that affects light refraction.



Figure 4

The Kaplan daguerreotype

This gives the viewer a sense of depth; but when the daguerreotype is photographically reproduced, the image in the resulting print loses detail and seems to flatten out.)

The Upper Face (Figure 5)

In the Kaplan daguerreotype, the hair appears to be dark and thick. The style is identical to that worn by Lincoln in his early and late portraits. There is a characteristic "tuft" on the right, above the ear. The top of the left ear is totally covered by hair that is purposely combed forward, as it is in many Lincoln photographs. The forehead is high and broad, and the hairline in the left temporal region is also identical to those in later photographs. The skin here appears to be rough, with numerous discontinuous lines that suggest the advent of heavy wrinkles.



Figure 5

The glabellar region (between the eyebrows, above the nose) appears to be free of hair. There are two discrete ascending and oblique shadows that anticipate the older Lincoln's frown lines.

The eyebrows are heavy and have two different hair patterns, similar to the eyebrows in the known photographs of Lincoln. The medial (inner) portion is dark and linear whereas the lateral (outer) half is more bushy. The left eyebrow, the one fully seen, extends over the entire length of the superior orbital rim.

To round out this discussion of the forehead features in the Kaplan daguerreotype, let me present another "similarity." As mentioned earlier the neurologist, Dr. Kempf, found evidence of a depressed skull fracture in the Lincoln life mask; however, visual evidence of that injury is absent in the Kaplan, nor is it to be found in any other known Lincoln photographic image.

The Central Face (Figure 6)

The young man in the Kaplan has bilateral ptosis (drooping eyelids) as does the older Lincoln in almost every photograph examined. Note that this rare condition [24,25] is a strong factor in support of the authenticity of the Kaplan.



Figure 6

Two other findings are characteristic: the lateral extension of the free border of the upper lid beyond the outer corner of the eye (lateral commissure), and the well-defined upper and lower superficial heads of the medial canthal tendon, which attaches the inner corner of the eye commissure [26]. The upper segment is easily seen in all Lincoln portraits, whereas the lower branch is only occasionally seen because of shadows or poor photographic depth-of-field. Photographic representation of these features is not at all ordinarily seen in pictures of individuals, but it is present in known Lincoln portraits and in the Kaplan image, another strong argument in favor of the Kaplan's authenticity.

There is a phenomenon known as Hirschberg's test of corneal light reflex, a white dot seen in both eyes that reflects the prime source of illumination. Usually, the dots are located in the same spot in both eyes (with regard to the iris, or "black of the eye.") However, in the Kaplan, and in the other Lincoln images, this is not true. The left eye's gaze is in fact slightly more lateral, placing the dot in that eye toward the inside.

The region under the left eye is marked by two dark spots, the upper one of which is found in several of the Lincoln portraits.

The left malar (cheekbone) prominence is well-outlined and delineated by a shadow that descends onto the cheek and turns inward toward the labial commissure (corner of mouth). This would suggest the heavy bone structure typical of a massive physique such as Lincoln's. The

nose is long, broad, and well-defined. The nasal bridge is wide. Although a shadow on the right side of the nose gives the impression that the dorsum is humped, close examination of the daguerreotype shows that the nose is, in reality, only slightly bossed. The nares are delicate and well-defined. The alar cartilage (the cartilage supporting the nostrils) do not appear to be over-sized. The skin appears to have a fine quality. Naturally, this is not true in later Lincoln portraits, where the skin appears to be heavier due to wrinkling, a result of the aging process.

In the Kaplan, the columella (the skin between the nostrils) is rather broad, and the columellar-labial angle (the angle it makes with the upper lip) appears to be close to 90 degrees; both of these features are seen in the later Lincoln images.

The Lower Face (Figure 7)

The philtral columns (the edges of the vertical groove in the upper lip) are well-marked, almost parallel, and extend to the base of the nose. The Cupid's bow (the mid-segment of the upper lip) is delicately formed and harmonious. The vermillion (the red area of the lip) is rather narrow at the lateral aspect of the lip and seems to end short of the commissure (the corner of the mouth), presenting a crease. The

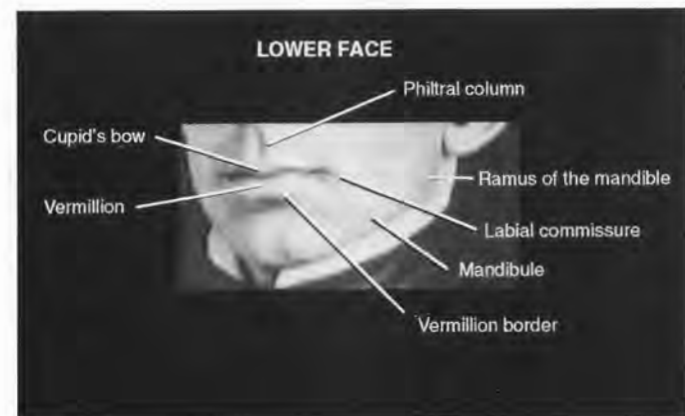


Figure 7

crease is a wrinkle that is seen directed downward; both of these characteristics are life-long and are seen in later Lincoln images.

The shadow of the left naso-labial crease (one of the two creases that "calipers" down from the nose to frame the upper lip) extends from the superior aspect of the nares to the modiolus. (The modiolus is a point outside and slightly above the corner of the mouth where several muscles join.) In some people this point would be marked by a dimple, but in Lincoln, it is seen as a vertical crease. The modiolus is not seen on the left side of the Kaplan face, but is clearly seen on the right.

A faint circular shadow appears at the lower portion of the middle third of the right nasolabial crease, which is the precise location of Lincoln's characteristic nevus (prominent right mole) seen in later Lincoln images. There is also a highlight, or faint shadow, more to the middle and below this at the vermillion border (the line demarcating the red and white portions of the lip) that probably is another mole, corresponding to a similar skin lesion in several Lincoln photographs.

The lower lip, on the contrary, is full and appears to protrude beyond the free margin of the upper lip throughout. This appears to be more significant laterally (at the ends). There is a blemish under the left commissure that is not found in other Lincoln pictures, and could be a 'cold sore' Lincoln had at the time the daguerreotype was made.

The prominent chin begins with a distinctive horizontal, midline shadow that demarcates it from the pouting lower lip. The chin appears asymmetrical because of a short vertical crease that is off-center, and turns to the subject's left distally (as it moves down). Consequently, the left half of the chin appears smaller than the right, one of the asymmetrical particularities noted in Dr. Kempf's analysis of the Life Mask. The jawline (mandible) is well-defined and broad. The mandibular (lower jaw) angle is sharp. As the ramus of the mandible turns upward toward the ear, it (the height of the jawbone) appears to be shorter in a Kaplan daguerreotype *print* than in Lincoln photographs; however, *in the actual Kaplan daguerreotype, it is the same.*

The Ears (Figure 8)

The ears appear to be prominent especially at the superior pole (the upper part that sticks out). Along the free margin (the running edge, or border) of the concha (the shell-like opening of the ear), the anti-helical

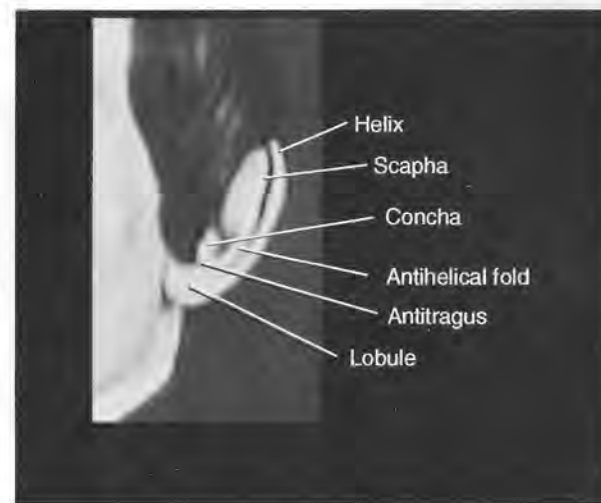


Figure 8

fold is well-defined, but its upper segment is absent. (The anti-helical fold is the bend in the wings of the ears that runs from the concha to the superior pole, molding the ear so that it conforms to the shape of the head.) There is a discrete Darwinian tubercle on the edge of the scapha (the area behind the concha that leads up to the helix, or curved-over rim of upper ear). The ear lobule hangs free and is close to the neck.

As one can see, in the foregoing discussion of facial characteristics found in the Kaplan daguerreotype, the vast majority of the facial features present in the Kaplan are also to be seen in later Lincoln pictures.

Discussion

The evidence put forward here points overwhelmingly to the probability that the Kaplan daguerreotype is indeed a portrait of Abraham Lincoln pre-dating the Meserve #1. The vast majority of features are either identical or strikingly similar.

There are some features in the Kaplan that seem, at first, not to coincide with features in known Lincoln images. However, to move

past first impressions, further investigation dramatically raises the level of coincidence to convincing heights.

One of these features concerns the angle the ear lobe forms with the neck. The angle is very small in the Kaplan but more open in all other Lincoln pictures. This is because of differences in body weight. The Kaplan Lincoln has a rounder face whereas the Meserve #1 and all other Lincoln pictures show a much thinner man with sunken cheeks. Using a laser copier, I artificially "aged" the Kaplan subject by darkening shadows. In this manner, I was able, visually, to "detach" the ear lobe from the neck, which made it identical to the other Lincoln likenesses. The other portions of the ear are very similar: the antitragus (the small protuberance aft and below the larger tragus), shape of the lobe, posterior sulcus (lower portion of the opening of the ear), and the scapha.

Another feature is that the chin in all of Lincoln's pictures shows a dimple while the chin in the Kaplan shows a cleft. Of major importance, however, is that Lincoln's asymmetrical chin is perfectly matched by the chin in the Kaplan [23,24].

Still another concerns the height of the ascending branch of the mandible (where the jawbone turns upward). In prints of the Kaplan, the branch seems to be too short when compared with known Lincoln images. However, examination of the actual daguerreotype clearly shows that the up-turned collar is above the jaw, and is bent out and down. The collar is not under the mandible as it appears in prints made from the daguerreotype. The exact length of the jaw is outlined by a faint horizontal shadow that cannot be seen in the prints. The ascending branch of the mandible is actually longer than shown in the prints, and matches Lincoln's skeletal structure.

Abraham Lincoln was known to be extremely strong and had an imposing physique. In his prime, he weighed at least 210 pounds and stood 6'4" [7]. We know that in his youth he put on public feats of strength — lifting weights and wrestling. The Kaplan daguerreotype shows a robust, barrel-chested, erect young man whose pose resonates strength. The outline of the trapezius muscle (between neck and shoulder) gives further evidence of a muscular build.

Lincoln experienced one of his fist dramatic weight losses in the early 1840s. Mr. Volk, the maker of the Lincoln life mask, recalls that

Lincoln said that he had again lost 40 pounds between 1858 and 1861 [11].

The style of dress worn by the Kaplan subject is not only correct for the period, it is similar to that which Lincoln kept during his entire life [4,27,28,29]. In fact, the jacket worn by the Kaplan subject is so similar to the one Abraham Lincoln wears in the 1848 Meserve #1, it may be the same jacket, judging by the way the lapel, button holes, and seams match in both daguerreotypes.

Careful study of all Lincoln pictures clearly shows that he presented ptosis of both eyes. This condition also exists in the Kaplan. In the Kaplan, the left eye is slightly more ptotic than the right. A chronological study of Lincoln photographs reveals that ptosis appears to become more severe in the left eye later in life. This birth defect, congenital ptosis, of course existed in both of Lincoln's eyes from the beginning, but, in its early stages, was probably not severe nor worthy of comment by others. His head injury contributed to an aggravation of the condition in the left eye. As time passed, aging, eyestrain, and a number of other factors amplified the ptotic condition in both eyes to the same degree, but manifested itself increasingly in the more affected left eye [30].

As Lincoln aged, his skin relaxed and forehead wrinkles became more pronounced. Vision in his left eye gradually became impaired. He inevitably developed the reflex of raising his left brow to relieve eye strain. This was described in a letter by Lincoln's law partner, William Herndon, as well as in photographs and observed by Kempf in the Volk life mask [11,22,23].

Although the extent of his boyhood head injury may only be speculated on, it is probable that, in addition to the depressed skull fracture resulting from the fronto-temporal (forehead, close to the temple) trauma, he may actually have sustained a left orbital blow-out fracture [31,32] (a fracture to the floor of the eye socket) and perhaps a superior orbital fissure syndrome [33] as well (paralysis of several voluntary and involuntary nerves in the eye), which alter the position of the eye in its socket, and cause damage to the motor nerves in that region. These injuries would identify the source of all of Lincoln's post-natal eye problems.

French Police Assistance

In search of another viewpoint, I turned to the police, using contacts made by the photographer who worked with me in preparing the collection of Lincoln prints used in this study.

I was fortunately able to meet and work with French police authorities of the Identité Judiciaire (Criminal I.D. Bureau) and examined Alphonse Bertillon's original early 1890s publications that deal with criminal identity utilizing photographs [34,35]. His system was the first scientific method of criminal identification [36]. Numerous celebrated crimes were solved using his classification of facial characteristics and anthropometrics. (Although a highly effective criminal identity technique, it was relegated to the background when the same M. Bertillon introduced fingerprint identification in France.)

Bertillon attached a great deal of importance to the structure of the ear, and also to that of the upper eyelid, having determined that these two features never changed during an individual's lifetime.

The police authorities involved in the study all agreed that the visible ear structure and upper eyelid in the Kaplan were identical to those in Lincoln photographs [37].

The police also prepared several reproductions of the Kaplan image on a succession of sheets of translucent paper, gradually accentuating shadows from one to the next in order to produce artificially images which would reflect the effects of age and weight loss. They also made translucencies of known Lincoln images. Careful comparisons of the facial structures of the different images were made by superimposing the translucencies and examining them over a light source. The police concluded that the facial structure of the Kaplan image and the known Lincoln were the same.

Interestingly, they also noticed that the position of Lincoln's left eyebrow was higher in the later pictures than in the Kaplan image; not knowing of the childhood head injury Lincoln suffered that affected his left eye, they were unwittingly observing Lincoln's progressive eye problem.

Conclusion

Although the portrait of the young man in the Kaplan daguerreotype initially does not seem to recall the images of the much older Abraham Lincoln [38], I believe, after undertaking numerous exacting comparisons, that the young man is indeed Lincoln.

The nature and number of similarities in the Kaplan daguerreotype and Lincoln images overwhelms coincidence and serves to identify the Kaplan daguerreotype as a portrait of Abraham Lincoln.

For further information, contact:

C. N. Frechette, M.D.
7, rue Theodule Ribot
75017 Paris
France

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Part Two

Artifact Description of Kaplan Daguerreotype

Grant B. Romer, Conservator

*George Eastman House
Rochester, NY*

On February 12, 1980, I examined, conserved, and documented the sixth-plate cased daguerreotype portrait believed by Mr. Albert Kaplan to be of Abraham Lincoln. Mr. Kaplan purchased this image from the stock of the Witkin Gallery in New York. The Witkin Gallery had made no identification of the subject, nor gave any information on its origins when asked by Mr. Kaplan. Mr. Kaplan carefully preserved the daguerreotype in the condition he had received it.

The way in which the Witkin Gallery acquired this item may not be recorded. Such galleries usually acquire groups of daguerreotypes for resale from dealers in photographica. Such dealers gather collections of stock from a variety of other dealers or "pickers", who rarely record the details of purchase. The field is notoriously lax in recording or transmitting information as to provenance of daguerreotypes of all levels of value and importance. Typically, daguerreotype collections are made up of items from many different regional sources, and frequently are separated from related, informative materials. Efforts to trace the original source of this daguerreotype are unlikely to be successful.

In the interest of gaining more information, either positive or negative, in determining the identity of the subject, its date or production, its maker, etc., and creating proper documentation of any intervention, Mr Kaplan requested that someone properly qualified at the International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House make that examina-

tion and documentation. The task was given to me as both Conservator and historian of American daguerrean production. The examination and documentation were made in concert with my then assistant, Mr. Peter Mustardo. My findings and actions on that day were as follows:

Examination Report

The image is housed in a dark brown "Turkey" leather covered wooden case. The front cover bears a shallow embossed abstracted floral design. The rear cover is without decoration, with four bevelled sides. There is fingernail abrasion damage to the leather exposing the wooden interior structure to the right of the closure hook. The interior of the front cover has a purple silk-covered cushion. This cushion has faded and spotted in the areas which have been in contact with the cover glass. The rear cover holds the plate package, which apparently consists of a cover glass, gilded octagonal opening mat, and image bearing plate. There is no "Preserver" binding frame. The case is in remarkably good condition. The case was obviously carefully stored and handled throughout its history. The entire case and framing package is typical of American daguerreotype productions of the 1840s and there is no evident reason to doubt that the total package configuration is anything other than original.

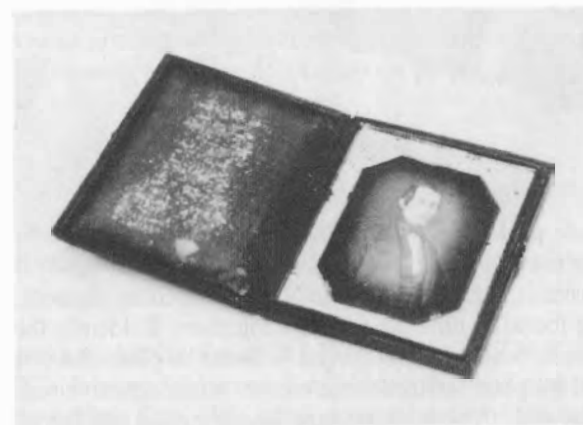


Plate package in case as presented



Plate package being removed from case

The cover glass is clean on the exterior and interior surfaces, with no sign of dirt or glass decomposition evident. The brass mat has abraded the plate in several places at the edges of the mat opening. The plate is vignettted by a purple tarnish shading to dark blue. The mat abrasions at the top horizontal border above the sitter's head and at the top right, bottom right, and bottom left angles of the mat opening are scratched through this tarnish revealing bright silver. This fact and the clean glass surface indicates the possibility that the plate package has been opened at some recent time, probably by the gallery, to prepare the daguerreotype for display and sale by cleaning the glass of decomposition products.

Interior examination

The plate package (cover glass, mat and plate) was carefully lifted out with a suction cup. There was little resistance, again indicating prior removal. This was immediately confirmed by modern masking tape being found to bind the package together. Evidently the original seal had been broken and removed in order to clean the cover glass. The rear of the plate retained some brown, brittle adhesive residue from the original seal. The masking tape was removed and the plate freed from the package. This plate is a silver clad, copper backed plate of American manufacture. This is proven by the plate maker's inscription which appears at the top border of the front of the plate. This inscrip-



Plate package after removal from case showing masking tape seal

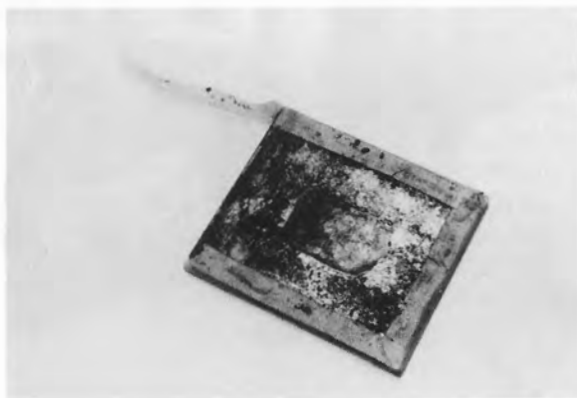


Examination of varnish-like material on rear of plate

tion stamped into the silver reads "E. WHITE MAKER N.Y. SECOND QUALITY". Edward White was a daguerreotypist and plate manufacturer in New York City. His exact dates of activity are not known; however he is listed in the New York City business directory in 1843, '44 and '50. In all probability he was active throughout the 1840s. In letters now in the IMP/GEH collection from White to Southworth &



First lifting of masking tape seal



Rear of plate packaging, masking tape being removed

Hawes there is reference to his commenced manufacturing activities. On December 14, 1844, White wrote "...we have commenced manufacturing plates". Daguerreotype plates were graded according to quality and thickness of silver, hence the "Second Quality" inscription. Although it is reasonable to assume that White used his own brand of



*Plate maker's mark at top left edge of plate –
"E WHITE MAKER NY"*



*Plate maker's mark at top right edge of plate –
"SECOND QUALITY"*

plates in his studio, attribution of authorship cannot be made on the basis of this inscription alone.

The plate has clipped corners to keep the plate from catching on the polishing buff, otherwise it is undistorted. The polishing marks are horizontal to the image axis as was standard practice.

The tarnish formation clearly indicates that the overmat is original to the plate. Indeed, I see no reason to doubt the entire package is original except for the seal.

The plate was photographed in black and white, and color transparencies, and immediately archivally re-sealed.

The image of the daguerreotype is laterally inverted as is typical with most daguerreotypes. In order to view the image as one would have viewed the subject in life it is necessary to reverse the negative during the process of making a modern print. Both Meserve #1 and the Kaplan daguerreotype should be reversed to permit the viewer to correlate these images with the later non-reversed life images of Lincoln.

Conclusion

From interior and exterior evidence, I conclude that this daguerreotype is an entirely American product made prior to 1845. The style of case, plate housing, sitter's dress, and hair style suggest an earlier rather than later 1840's date. The style of the posing and lighting in combination with the fine attire of the sitter suggest an urban rather than rural origin. The technical quality of the daguerreotype is very fine and above average for the period. No physical evidence in the form of an inscription, label, or stamp, beyond those above noted, is present.

For further information, contact:

Grant B. Romer, Conservator
International Museum of Photography and Film
George Eastman House
900 East Avenue
Rochester, NY 14607-2298