

~~ The Portrait of Lincoln ~~

Mary Clark and Frederick Ferris Thompson were avid supporters of Abraham Lincoln's campaign for the presidency. They believed in many of Lincoln's political positions, especially the abolition of slavery. In the hallway near the staircase at Sonnenberg hangs a portrait of Abraham Lincoln. It is a print taken from an early type of photography referred to as a ferrotype. The print is an enlargement of a smaller original.



Portrait Of Abe Lincoln As Seen Hanging In Mansion

Ferrotypes:

Ferrotypes, also commonly referred to as 'tintypes' were made using a thin sheet of iron coated with black enamel. Because they were not produced from a negative, the images were reversed. They are very dark gray, and the quality is often poor. They were often put into a papier-mache case or mounted onto cardboard. Most ferrotypes were fairly small, typically two-by-three inches. As a result of being made from such thin sheets of iron, they were prone to rust spots and blisters on the surface where the enamel had started to lift.

The original ferrotype of Lincoln was created by Matthew Brady on February 9, 1864. He is well known for civil war photographs of family farewell portraits, soldiers in camp and battlefield photo documentation. This particular pose of Lincoln is famous as it is used on a U.S. five-dollar bill. Lincoln also has his hair parted on the right side instead of his usual left side parting. He only wore his hair in this way from 1864 through 1865.

By this time, President Lincoln always wore a beard. Lincoln was never vain, a trait he shared with Mary Clark Thompson. He frequently used self-deprecating humor. As an example, during a debate with Stephen Douglas his retort to Douglas' description of him as two-faced, was "If I had another face, do you think I'd wear this one?" His change to a bearded appearance coincided with a letter he had received from an 11-year-old girl, Grace Bedell, from Westfield, NY, suggesting this. On the way to his inauguration following winning the 1860 election, he had his train stop there so he could pay her a visit.