

# Honest Abe-A to Z

"Lincoln: A Contemporary Portrait," edited by Allan Nevins and Irving Stone (Doubleday. 226 pp. \$4.50), assembles essays by a wide diversity of writers, including Norman Corwin and Marianne Moore, on our many-faceted sixteenth President. David M. Potter is author of "Lincoln and His Party in the Secession Crisis," which Yale University Press will reissue later this year.

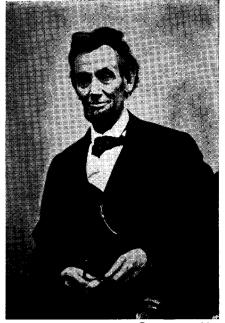
#### By DAVID M. POTTER

IN 1936, in an essay well known among historians, the late J. G. Randall asked a famous question: "Has the Lincoln Theme Been Exhausted?" Fortunately for his own reputation as a prophet, he said that it had not. Ever since then books on Lincoln have continued to accumulate in quantity, while the law of diminishing returns on quality has persistently refused to set in.

The twelve essays that make up "Lincoln: A Contemporary Portrait" offer striking evidence of the wide range of interest in Lincoln, while the variety of authors bears witness to the diversity of people who share this interest. Only four of the twelve essayists are professional historians. Along with them, one finds Marianne Moore, the poet; Norman Corwin, the radio writer; Fawn Brodie, the biographer, and also a United States district judge, a television producer, an expert on the history of the American Indians, a retired businessman, and an investment executive. Is there any other subject, one wonders, on which one could get together such a panel?

The topics covered run the gamut, encompassing Lincoln's humor (Mort Lewis), his biographers (Andrew Rolle), his debates with Douglas (Norman Corwin), his relations with Thaddeus Stevens (Fawn Brodie), his suspension of habeas corpus (Sherrill Halbert), his policy toward the Sioux after their 1862 uprising in Minnesota (David Miller), his role in the abortive peace conference at Hampton Roads in February 1865 (Justin Turner), and the books and libraries of his time (Jay Monaghan). Harold Hyman and William E. Marsh devote themselves to the rehabilitation of two of Lincoln's chief advisers, Edwin M. Stanton and Henry W. Halleck respectively. Both essays





-Bettmann Archive. Lincoln-his prose is a "Euclid of the heart."

are well argued, but neither, in my opinion, is entirely successful. Hyman has recently developed his views much more fully in a biography of Stanton.

This variety might be called Lincoln à la carte, and each item on the menu is likely to suit the taste of some particular group of readers. But those by Allan Nevins and Marianne Moore will probably have widest appeal. In appraising Lincoln's democratic ideas, Nevins shows cogently that they were practical rather than theoretical. Although Lincoln contributed very little to pure thought on democracy, he believed in it and cleaved to it, without idealizing or overestimating what could be expected of it. Miss Moore, writing on "Lincoln and the Art of the Word," demonstrates with apt quotations his unique combination of rigorous logic and evocation of feeling. Reminding us that he studied six books of Euclid intensively, she observes that Lincoln's prose is a "Euclid of the heart."

In the Introduction, Irving Stone remarks that, although the separate pieces were not designed to form any kind of pattern, nevertheless as each one came in it "seemed to fit as an integral part of a design. Lincoln emerged as a man unified in mind, spirit, and action; we were tempted to title the book: "United He Stands."

## Literary Sampler

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are searching for ourselves, our selvesthat, through whatever complex of factors, most of us have lost the clear identifying sense of just who and what we are-each of us, just what his real po-tentialities and limitations are, what that peculiar hallmark of identity that enables him to feel that he not only inhabits but fits his skin, all of a piece, body, mind and spirit, thought, word and action one, so that he has made, each to his degree, his peace with himself and gained sufficient self-knowledge to be ready to turn outward to move among others with good will and genuine interest; to engage, in a spirit of mutuality and with a sense of discreteness, friendly otherness, the individuals he meets.

-From "The Hands of Esau," by Hiram Hayden, to be published by Harper in June.

#### **Cheers** for Surratt

KATE STONE of Louisiana-whose diary was published in 1955, under the title "Brokenburn: The Journal of Kate Stone, 1861-1868"-is the typical Dixie heroine, as approved by the Southern tradition. In her opinions, she is perfectly orthodox. When the Federal fleet arrives, she declares that the Yankee gunboats "are polluting the waters of the grand old Mississippi." "Is the soul of Nero reincarnated in the form of Butler?" she asks, when General Ben Butler in New Orleans has a Louisiana gentleman shot for tearing down the flag of the Union. "I wonder what will be the result of this diabolical move," she writes of the Emancipation Proclamation. "I think there is little chance of a happy hereafter for President Lincoln." And of Lincoln's assassination she writes, "All honor to J. Wilkes Booth, who has rid the world of a tyrant and made himself famous for generations. Surratt has also won the love and applause of all Southerners by his daring attack on Seward, whose life is trembling in the balance. How earnestly we hope our two avengers may escape to the South, where they will meet with a warm welcome.'

-From "Patriotic Gore: Studies in the Literature of the American Civil War," by Edmund Wilson, to be published this month by Oxford.

#### Boom-lay, Boom! at Prep

THE PLAYING fields of Princeton, so accessible in my fancy, seemed hopelessly remote then in fact, for I was only just setting foot in the world of blackboards, books, and other boys.

This world opened for me one September day when I was put in the car, taken to Great Neck Preparatory School with my sisters, who were already sprinkled through the upper grades, and installed in kindergarten. Great Neck Prep was a private country day school, several miles from home, which was founded in the early 1920's by B. Lord Buckley. Mr. Buckley must have been quite a figure in primary education, for he founded four or five other schools in and around New York. I remember him faintly from one of my first school assemblies-an old man in black, dangling and snapping his gold watch to amuse the youngest boys and girls. Another old man I remember from the same misty period was Vachel Lindsay, the poet, who came to give a "recital." To us moppets in the front row he seemed like some grotesque prophet, his white hair astray, his voice intoning "Boom-lay, boom-lay, boom-lay, boom!" We tittered, and were hustled back to our classroom to be disciplined for not recognizing culture when we saw it. -By William Zinsser, from "Five Boyhoods: Howard Lindsay, Harry Golden, Walt Kelly, William K. Zinsser and John Updike," edited by Martin Levin, to be published this month by Doubleday.

#### Slavish Habits

THERE was no mistaking the bitterness and hopelessness which may have been long housed within [Morris Lindsay], thinly guised with an easy affability, an ever-ready badinage.

"You came here expecting to find us all practically standing on our heads in an ecstacy of freedom gained. Freedom! You heard or perhaps read of others fighting and dying for freedom and you thought that if other parts of Africa are like that, Sierra Leone cannot be different. You couldn't be more wrong. We're different because we never fought for anything. I'm talking about the Sierra Leone the world knows, that little piece of it which is called the colony because the protectorate is still mostly unknown territory. The freed slaves who settled here never really got over being slaves; they persisted in their slavish habits and treated the indigenous Africans as badly, if not worse, than they had once been treated. To them the British settlers and traders were not oppressors or exploiters, but examples which they assiduously copied in dress, speech, religion and attitudes. There is no genuine background of mistrust and antagonism here between the black settlers and the white, and not very much between the black indigenes and the white administrators either. But the indigenes had had very little reason to love the creoles, who were These men out-fought, out-thought, and out-dared the enemy!

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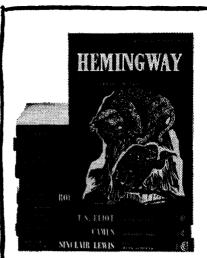
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-From "A Kind of Homecoming," by E. R. Braithwaite, to be published this month by Prentice-Hall.

#### Frustrating the Sharks

T IS funny that people always think of the Arctic as a place of snow and frost and terrible winters. They forget, or perhaps they have never heard, about the summers when the sun is in the sky both night and day, when your eyes get tired even when you wake up in the morning because the tent is so bright and when it is too hot to cover your head with caribou skins to get some darkness. In such a smiling summer there is dead calm weather for weeks at a time. There is not wind enough to blow out a match, and not a cloud is in the sky. Such things are hardly known in other places of the world. I have spent days and days in the Arctic at such a season sitting out in a kayak, waiting for seals to pop up to the surface of the water so that I might either hurl my harpoon into them or shoot them with a gun. In the latter case I always hope that I can get close enough to them to get my harpoon into their bodies before they sink, because a seal is lean at that time of the year. It has been sleeping on the ice throughout the spring instead of eating, and does not have enough blubber to buoy it up, so it sinks to the bottomto the great delight of the sharks, but not the hunter.

-From "Peter Freuchen's Book of Arctic Exploration," edited and with a preface by Dagmar Freuchen, to be published this month by Coward-McCann.

## Fiction

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cupants of the "Owl's Roost," is the first to catch our fancy, and she stays with us loyally to the end. She finds the drowned body of a Potawatomi Bible Club girl, and finally she will have to endure the tragedy of another death. In the meantime, she runs onto a scene of dalliance between her mother and the dashing reporter, father of the boy she will grow fond of; she manages to slip her supple, youthful shoulders out from under the heavy arm of bold

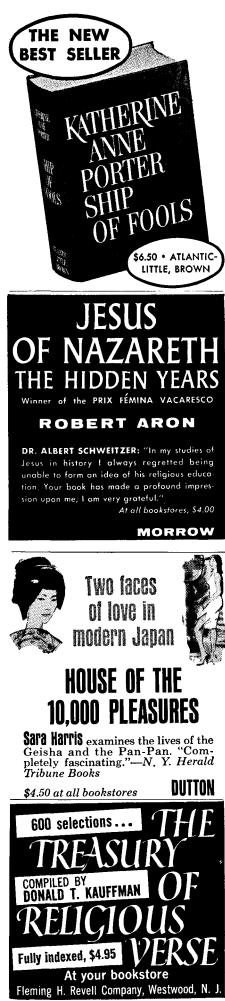


Monk Ardway; she charms you with her abundant mixture of the sweet, eager, naïve, fearful, and adventurous.

It's all a believable story (except that someone has his month wrong, or his stars, when he sees Sirius and the Pleiades in June) and a substantial piece of writing, with body to it and muscle. Here is the lush variety of a contemporary community's real life, moderately dramatic, truthfully picturesque, brimming over with the common, familiar, and everlasting emotions. "Heartwarmy" things, says Elizabeth, aren't stylish. They could be; and Miss Sandburg, who, as befits her father's daughter, has always been a heartwarmy writer, grows constantly subtler, more discriminating and persuasive.

-W. G. Rogers.





#### SR/April 21, 1962

# Books in the News

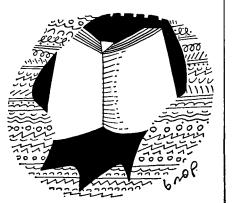
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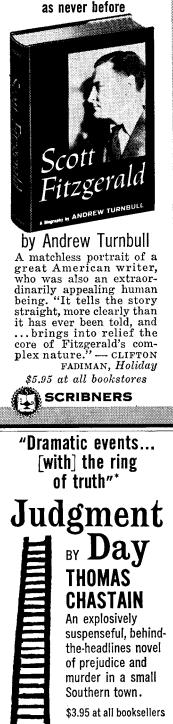
tests were purposely carried out in several most bitterly contested sections. Distinctive are the jail and road-gang experiences of young nonviolent volunteers in such places as Tallahassee, Fla., Rock Hill, S.C., Montgomery, Ala., and elsewhere. The author, incidentally, is honest enough to mention that the Catholic school in Rock Hill, S.C., "was desegregated without incident, and without outcry from segregationists." (May I add that this action took place before the Supreme Court decree of May 17, 1954.)

Some of his story's effectiveness is marred by the fact that Jim Peck and other Freedom Ride pioneers were old pacifist hands and habitual protesters. Pacifism is another question, and you may argue it on its own merits, but (save for the nonviolent method employed), it is not pertinent to the Freedom Ride movement as such.

From a practical point of view, the example of Knoxville is impressive; there the movement was planned and executed by the local educators, clergy, and other responsible persons of both races. The mayor himself was sympathetic, and the police, whatever their personal convictions, did in the main a good job of preserving order. In Mr. Proudfoot's analysis, the Knoxville experience pointed out the need, a universal one, for a wide program of popular education both within the churches and outside them. Without such an educational program, much of a protest's vigor is sapped at the roots. Not every objective was achieved, but a goodly number were.

Reverend Proudfoot is a bit vexed by the difficulty of getting his sympathetic clergymen to work out a coordinated plan. I regret the sudden note of bitterness with which he concludes his story, and judge it as rather a bit of rhetoric. Certainly he and his brave, kindly associates came off much better than did the fiery prophet Amos at the hands of the pompous Amaziah (Amos 7, 10-17).



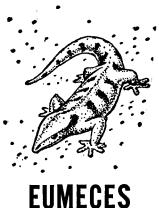


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DOUBLEDAY

\*N.Y. Herald Tribune Book Review What is a



# EUMECES SKILTONIANUS?

A Eumeces skiltonianus is a type of lizard commonly known as the blue-tailed skink.

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MUSIC TO MY EARS

### Bernstein Conducts Nielsen, Gould Plays Brahms—Munch

Being as articulate as he is may have its problems for Leonard Bernstein, but it also has its advantages—as a way of avoiding ulcers, say. Rather than repressing his disagreement with a soloist's conception of a work they recently performed with the New York Philharmonic in Carnegie Hall, or swallowing his pride (than which there is nothing more indigestible) and sharing the critical consequence, he simply prefaced the performance with a verbal statement of his disagreement, praised the player as a "valid and serious artist" with a right to his views, and got on with the job.

Unorthodox as this procedure may be, it may be the orthodox way in the future for a conductor to deal with the problem of collaborating-as the expression goes-with the unquestionably talented, wholly individualistic Glenn Gould. When he first came into view (1955), the range of his eccentricities, whether conducting with one hand while he played with the other, singing in an undertone, or slumping crosslegged at the keyboard, did not intrude on the rectitude of his musical impulses, their vitality, and, with rare exceptions, their justice. But time, and success, have given him the aspect of a musical Don Quixote tilting at windmills of conformity.

On this occasion vitality was the one element conspicuously lacking in his performance of the Brahms No. 1, which (like some solo pieces of this composer he recorded a while back) was slow to the point of sluggishness. Even if his view of the first movement could be indulged, it imposed (by a percentage of contrast) a funereal pace on the following adagio which left it gasping for breath. The fundamental fact is, however, that Gould didn't show the breadth of pianistic style or the technical resource to play this work impressively at any tempi, even his own.

One by-product of this by-product of the evening's music was to detract attention from the first half of the program, which, being devoted to works of Carl Nielsen, was unique in itself. First there was the spirited "Maskarade" overture efficiently performed under the direction of John Canarina, one of Bernstein's assistants this season, then the Fifth Symphony of 1921, not previously performed by this orchestra. Not the most approachable of the six for a listener unversed in the Dane's vocabulary, it has the practical merit of being highly performable. Its thematic seeds are nurtured into orchestral growths of radiance and power, it proceeds from movement to movement with a sure sense of direction.

As Gould rejects the strain of playing the full Philharmonic sequence, Andre Previn had the opportunity for an appearance at the Saturday night concert as soloist in the Shostakovitch Piano Concerto No. 1. Musically, Previn qualified without question, and pianistically he commands this work. But the sound he produces-dry, percussive, and a little shallow-speaks the tonal accent of his jazz and pop orientation in a way that is hard to disguise.

The musical equivalent of the changing of the guard occupied the attention of two audiences in Carnegie Hall during the week as Charles Munch directed his final concerts with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. With him went the tradition of a Saturday matinee, for in Philharmonic Hall, next season, the orchestra will have two evening concerts.

Those who recall the similar departure of Serge Koussevitzky in 1949 from the orchestra he led for twenty-five years would describe that as a wrench, this merely as a separation. An unquestionably attractive personality (attested by the long-continued applause at the end of his final "Daphnis et Chloé" as he stood beside a huge gilded wreath dispatched by a subscriber of sixty-five years' devotion) as well as a genuinely modest man, Munch will be remembered more for the strength of his narrow affinities than the depth of his broad sympathies. Nor, for that matter, is the Boston "primacy" among orchestras of the world what it used to be. It has, of course, status; but its stature is in need of attention.

Arousing, as always, were the performances of Berlioz's "Symphonie fantastique," Debussy's "La Mer," and the Ravel which comprised both programs. Something of the character of the man, however, was revealed in his insistence on sharing the applause with Richard Burgin, retiring as the orchestra's concertmaster after a career that began in 1920, and with Doriot Anthony Dwyer, for her part as solo flutist in the Ravel. Indeed, Munch's introduction of her as the first female soloist in the Boston Symphony's history may be among his most remembered deeds.

-IRVING KOLODIN.