

# Joseph Crosby Lincoln

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## JOSEPH C. LINCOLN

*An Appreciation by Hamlin Garland*

Joseph Lincoln is not only a novelist of wide reputation, he is a public benefactor. His success has in it something heartening and corrective. In the midst of work which appeals to the base and cynical in human life (American city life) his clean, wholesome, humorous stories of Cape Cod sea captains and their neighbors, give evidence of the fact that there is a huge public for decent and homely fiction, just as the success of his play "Shavings" is evidence that there is a paying audience for a decent and homely drama.

His books can be read aloud in the family circle with joy to all the members of it—I know, for I have myself read eight or ten of them to my wife and daughters. They make no pretence of being profound, or new, or "smart." They are filled with the characters and the humor which are native to the Cape. Lincoln knows these Cape towns and their inhabitants as Irving Bacheller knows his men of the North Woods, for he was raised among them and lives in their neighborhood several months of each year. He looks like one of them, like an old skipper, hearty, unassuming and kindly. The task which he has set himself is one which calls for a keen sense of character, democracy of sentiment and a fancy which never—or very seldom—loses its hold on the solid ground of experience. His plots are sometimes negligible, but his characters, even when they seem a bit repetitions, are a joy. His prosperity is well earned.

HAMLIN GARLAND.

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## JOSEPH CROSBY LINCOLN

"A stretch of hill and valley, swathed thick in robes of  
white,  
The buildings blots of blackness, the windows gems of  
light,  
A moon, now clear, now hidden, as in its headlong race  
The north wind drags the cloud wrack in tatters o'er  
its face;  
Mailed twigs that click and clatter upon the tossing tree,  
And, like a giant's chanting, the deep voice of the sea  
As 'mid the stranded ice cakes the bursting breakers  
foam—  
The old familiar picture—a winter night at home."

"WINTER NIGHTS AT HOME" FROM "CAPE COD BALLADS"



**I**T was in just such a setting as this that Joseph C. Lincoln made his appearance in this world. Had he been a few hours earlier, he might have shared the same birthday with another illustrious Lincoln, Abraham. Perhaps the Fates held council and decided that it would never do to have two famous Lincolns born on the same day. At all events, the vital records show that Joseph Crosby Lincoln was born on the 13th of February, 1870, at Brewster on Cape Cod, not many miles from the spot where the Pilgrim Fathers landed after their memorable voyage just two hundred and fifty years before.

The old sea captains who have helped to make the Cape famous and who figure so delightfully in almost every story Lincoln writes are nearly all gone now, but in 1870 there were plenty of them. Lincoln's own father was one, a veteran of many a daring voyage to far distant lands. So were his grandfather and all his uncles. And there were others on every hand. Indeed, the population of the staid little village

of Brewster was made up almost wholly of sea cap'ns and their families. For fully a mile each way from the Lincoln homestead—there are only two ways from any place on Cape Cod—every house contained a Cap'n.

A year after the boy was born, Captain Lincoln died of a fever in Charleston, South Carolina, and upon his mother fell the task of shaping young Lincoln. She was a brave, self-reliant woman, who had made many adventurous voyages with her husband, and to her tender care, devotion and inspiration her son has himself paid loving tribute in many of his poems and sketches.

In his boyhood young Joe roamed the Cape at will. He knew every nook and inlet, every place to fish, every cranberry bog, every sand dune. And best of all he knew and loved and was loved by most of the inhabitants. He rode the old stage coach from Harwich to Chatham; he knew the lightkeepers, the fishermen, the life savers, and the cracker-box oracles in the village stores. The perfume of the green salt meadows, the pungent pines and bayberry were as nectar to him. The fishing boats, the dripping nets, "the mighty surge and thunder of the surf along the shore" were part of his very existence.



*Mr. Lincoln's Birthplace*

It is this wonderful familiarity with the subject, the deep understanding and sympathy for all these various types and scenes that asserts itself so pleasingly



and convincingly in all that he writes. The racy vernacular of his characters rings true; his folks are real people—people that we all somehow feel that we have known.

In those days it was an accepted fact that most Cape Cod boys, when they reached "cabin boy" age, should go to sea as their fathers before them had done. Generally they sailed with a neighbor, or a relative, who taught them the lore of the great sailing ships and drilled them in navigation till they were ready to command ships of their own. But young Lincoln's relatives had other plans for him. They thought he would make a splendid financier and arranged for him to enter a banking house in Boston. One can picture the mental torture of the young man thus miscast. In his novel, "Galusha the Magnificent," Lincoln takes the temperamental Galusha through this same experience. Laughable enough it seems as Lincoln writes it in the story, but it is doubtful if his own affair seemed quite as humorous at the time.

After many months Lincoln escaped from the figures and accounts, and he confesses, "I have always felt that they were fully as glad to get rid of me as I was to leave them." He knew by that time what he wanted to do. But it was not, dear reader, what you surmise. He wanted to be an artist. How many authors have begun with the brush, later to discard it



*The old church where Lincoln was baptized looks much the same as it did on that auspicious day*



*Mr. Lincoln on a fishing jaunt with Harold Brett, who has illustrated many of his books*

for the pen! Eventually under the guidance of Henry Sandham, whose signature was the familiar "Hy," he went to Boston, where he and a friend began to do commercial work. The young fellows were not overwhelmingly successful and often to make a picture sell better he wrote a verse or a joke. Presently he found that the verses sold better without the pictures. He began to write verses and short stories in earnest—verses in swinging meter about the old home and the folks down on the Cape—stories that revealed a quaint, witty and wholly delightful people. They were like a

breath of invigorating salt air and the editors snapped them up with zest.

His first short story Lincoln sold to the Saturday Evening Post; the succeeding ones lauded in many other prominent magazines. His verses appeared in Harper's Weekly, Puck, The Youth's Companion and other journals.

About this time bicycling came into its heyday. The League of American Wheelmen was a flourishing organization of several hundred thousand with an official (and very readable) publication known as the Bulletin. Lincoln spent three years as associate editor and when interest in bicycling began to drop he wisely decided to try his hand as a full-

fledged writer. To New York he came, with a young wife and child to serve both as inspiration and incentive to bigger things.

In 1902, Mr. Lincoln collected his verses to make his first book, "Cape Cod Ballads." It was a neat little volume, with pictures by Kemble. Many of these verses are read each season by Mr. Lincoln in his lectures and the book has attained enormous popularity. A new gift edition of these Ballads has recently been issued, in a box with "Our Village," another charming volume containing sketches fragrant of old times.

Mr. Lincoln's first novel was "Cap'n Eri," that deliciously human tale of the three old sea cap'n's who, despairing of their joint efforts as housekeepers, advertised for a wife. It is difficult to guess at the number of editions that have been printed of "Cap'n Eri" and it is hard, too, to believe that the story which seems so spontaneously funny was written under great labor on a corner of the dining room table from midnight on Saturdays through Sunday mornings until the manuscript was completed.

Following "Cap'n Eri" Mr. Lincoln wrote "Partners of the Tide," "Mr. Pratt" and "The Old Home House." Then came a long string of notable



*Cape Cod Folks*



successes, beginning with "Cy Whittaker's Place" and ending, for the moment, with "Galusha the Magnificent." One remarkable thing about Mr. Lincoln's success as a writer is the fact that each succeeding novel has a larger sale than the one which preceded it. It is doubtful if any other American writer has a record as enviable as this.

There are three—sometimes four—hours a day that Mr. Lincoln reserves sacredly to himself for work. These are from nine in the morning until noon or one o'clock, during which time he disappears into his workshop, the address of which no one knows but himself, and either writes or blocks out his characters and plots. It may be added that Mr. Lincoln scorns a typewriter and when writing uses a soft stubby pencil and generously large sheets of yellow paper.

Mr. Lincoln has little sympathy with the creators of fault-finding and sordid novels of small town life, who insist that that sort of thing, and it alone, is "realism." He has no desire to attempt this style of literature himself. "Perhaps I *could* write a story with wholly gloomy situations and unhappy misadventures," he said recently, "but I wouldn't like to try it. I would much rather try to make people cheerful and keep myself cheerful at the same time. Life contains both laughter and sorrow; and it seems to me that one is as real as the other."

The popular impression that Mr. Lincoln uses actual people as characters in his books and actual localities for his scene is without foundation, despite the fact that many people who have been to Cape Cod will swear that they know just the place or the person he refers to. Regarding this Mr. Lincoln says:

"In writing of a Cape Cod town or village, although I purposely refrained from describing it as any one town in





*Mr. Lincoln's Summer Home on Cape Cod*

particular, I have tried conscientiously to give it the characteristics of Cape Cod towns I am acquainted with. The promontories and inlets and hills and marshes in 'my' Cape Cod may not be found where I have located them, but I have tried very hard to make them like those which are, or were, to be found on the real Cape.

"And so with the Cape Codders in my stories. I have never knowingly drawn the exact, recognizable portrait of an individual. I have, of course, received hundreds of letters from readers who inform me, in strict confidence, that they know the original of 'Cap'n ——' and recognized him at once. Nevertheless, they are wrong, for no character of mine has been, if I could prevent it, a portrait of one living or who has lived. I have endeavored always to be true to type, and in writing of the old deep-sea captain, the coasting skipper, the longshoreman or the people of the Cape villages, I have done my best to portray each as I have seen and known specimens

of his or her kind. But I have endeavored just as sincerely never to draw an individual portrait which might offend or hurt. And in attempting to transcribe the habit of language I have made it a rule never to use an expression or idiom I have not heard used by a native of the old colony."

As a matter of fact, Mr. Lincoln does not have to study Cape Codders. He is, of course, one of them. His very speech marks him as such—the slightly clipped, curt words: the "hev" and "hed" that once in a while take the place of have or had, and even (whisper it) a touch of good old Yankee, talking through his nose.

His great success has brought him to that happy stage, enjoyed by comparatively few authors, where his work is actually sought by editors for magazine publication years in advance of its being written. His books are eagerly sought out by theatrical producers for plays and motion pictures. A play based upon his novel, "Shavings," has been one of the real dramatic successes of recent years.

Some years ago a reporter asked Mr. Lincoln to name his favorite author. He said in reply:

"I have a good many, for I read all sorts of books, and at all times. I don't know that I can name any particular author who may be called my favorite. I am very fond of Stevenson, for instance—but then, so I am of Kipling—of Mark Twain, of Tarkington, and many others. I think I like a story for the story's sake. I like to like my characters or dislike them in the old-fashioned way. I realize—no one can help realizing—the fine literary craftsmanship in a book like 'Lord Jim.' It is a wonderful piece of character mosaic, and yet in reading it I am always conscious of the literary work. I say to myself, 'This is marvelous; see how the writer is picking his hero to

pieces, thought by thought, motive by motive.' And being so conscious of the writer, I do not lose myself in the story. This is not offered as criticism: certainly I should not presume to criticise Mr. Conrad. It is more of a confession of something lacking on my part. I enjoy reading 'Lord Jim,' or 'The Old Wives' Tale,' but I do not return to them again and again as I do to—well, to 'Huckleberry Finn' or 'The Beloved Vagabond.' Perhaps this is, as some of my realistically inclined friends tell me, a childish love for romance on my part. If it is, I can't help it; as I said, this statement is not offered as an excuse, but a confession.

"This sort of thing shows in my own stories. It would be very hard for me to write a long story which should end dismally. It is only too true that stories in real life frequently end that way, but I don't like my yarns to do so. So it is fair to presume that in the majority of books I may hereafter write, the hero and heroine will be united, virtue rewarded and vice punished, as has happened in most of those for which I am



*Another view of Mr. Lincoln's Cape Cod Home*

already responsible. Perhaps this same weakness for a story, a cheerful story, makes me care little for the so-called problem novel. It doesn't mean that I am not fond of novels dealing with certain kinds of problems. Winston Churchill's political stories, or his 'The Inside of the Cup,' I like immensely; but the sex problem—the divorce question, and all that sort of thing—does not appeal to me. A morbid lot of disagreeable people, married or otherwise, moping and quarreling through a long story seem to me scarcely worth while. To a specialist in nervous diseases such a study might be interesting, but I really doubt if the average healthy man or woman finds it so. Certainly we should not care to associate with such people were they living near us. We should get away from them if we could."

Mr. Lincoln's favorite recreations are fishing and golf. He still haunts the ponds, the little lakes and the bays of his boyhood, where the bass fight hardest and the largest pickerel are found. Occasionally he takes a jaunt into Maine or Canada to try his luck with the northern fish. He works systematically in the morning at his writing, but in the afternoon he frequently may be found on one of the beautiful golf courses overlooking the sea near his Cape Cod home, or motor-ing over the Cape Cod roads, or superintending a clambake for a party of friends, a task at which he shines as brilliantly as any of his cap'ns. His entire summers are generally spent on the Cape, but in the winter he goes to New York, where he works even longer hours than in summer.

The Lincoln clan appears ever to be exponents of true American life and ideals. As Abe Lincoln, our great President, gave his all to upbuild America, so, too, is Joe Lincoln endeavoring to uphold in his inimitable novels our finest

traditions. "He is saving for us a precious part of America," says Hildegarde Hawthorne in her splendid tribute entitled "Joseph C. Lincoln's America," "writing down, before it is too late, a past recent enough, but changing fast, a past closely woven into the very fibre of our character and meaning as a nation. He shows us, too, the coming era, the Cape Cod of today against its background of yesterday. And when I say Cape Cod I mean pretty much any part of our country that is not within the boundaries of a great city, but that has drawn from the fountains of American heritage for its foundations."

Oct 3, 1850  
 I beg your pardon - really, & beg your pardon,  
 returned me and ever again. I quite forgot. It  
 was impossible of me. I'm so sorry.  
 Evidently, he felt that he had committed a  
 crime. Mr. Paine had taken the three <sup>one dollar bills</sup> ~~dollars~~ and returned the  
 balance inside of it then.  
 Don't you mind, Mr. Burrows, he acted, obviously,  
 as the car began to - "Confusion is liable to forget."  
 O it

A Bit of the Manuscript for "Galusha the Magnificent"

**GALUSHA THE MAGNIFICENT**

Laughable, lovable Galusha Bangs, whimsical and impractical archeologist, in his entertaining way brings about great results in a village down East.

**THE PORTYGEE**

The temperament and "calf love" of the son of a Spanish opera singer make difficulties with his Yankee grandfather.

**SHAVINGS**

The quaint, unbusinesslike windmill-maker has no success in posing as a bank robber, but his loyalty and shrewdness bring happiness to all his friends.

**MARY-GUSTA**

A pair of old sea captains become guardians to an orphan girl. She mothers them persistently, in spite of their efforts to bring her up.

**EXTRICATING OBADIAH**

Cap'n Noah Newcomb extricates his former cabin boy from the dangers involved in unexpectedly inheriting a fortune.

**THANKFUL'S INHERITANCE**

Thankful Barnes and her helper Emily lose their boarders when the house proves "haunted," but they gain a Cape Cod Sea Captain and a handsome young lawyer—for life.

**KENT KNOWLES: Quahaug**

Kent Knowles resembled the quahaug. But his search for a long lost cousin's child, "Little Frank," who turns out to be Frances, has a radical effect on the erstwhile quahaug.

**CAP'N DAN'S DAUGHTER**

Cap'n Dan's daughter rescues her father from her mother's social ambitions, by showing the good lady an exaggerated imitation of her own doings.

**MR. PRATT'S PATIENTS**

Mr. Solomon Pratt and his friend Miss Eureka Sparrow introduce original methods in the Sea Breeze Bluff Sanatorium for Rest and Right Living.

**THE RISE OF ROSCOE PAINE**

Roscoe Paine and his sister seek a simple style of living on Cape Cod, but they find adventure and romance.

**THE POSTMASTER**

Cap'n Zeb Snow is discontented with inactivity after retiring from the sea. As postmaster he finds all the activity he wants.

**CAP'N WARREN'S WARDS**

Cap'n Warren feels himself in strange waters as guardian to a niece and nephew brought up in snobbish New York society.

**THE WOMAN-HATERS**

A young man and an old lighthouse keeper, both avowed woman-haters, catch each other clearing up the misunderstandings which have made them so.

**THE DEPOT MASTER**

The depot master has unsurpassed opportunities for observing the people and events of the village, and he himself becomes involved in tangled love affairs.

**KEZIAH COFFIN**

Keziah Coffin, typical Cape Cod old maid, proves the good angel of the minister in his courtship. Incidentally, she turns out not to be incurably an old maid.

**CY WHITTAKER'S PLACE**

Old Cy Whittaker, bachelor, adopts a little girl. He and an old crony form a "Board of Strategy" for her upbringing.

**CAPE COD BALLADS**

Over eighty poems of Cape Cod scenes and people. Is included with "Our Village" in the illustrated gift edition.

**OUR VILLAGE**

In a series of unforgettable little sketches, Mr. Lincoln describes the life and the people of Cape Cod thirty years ago. This book may now be had, together with "Cape Cod Ballads," in the special new illustrated gift edition.

**PARTNERS OF THE TIDE**

Cap'n Ezra Titcomb and young Bradley Nickerson go into the wrecking business and meet with a series of surprising adventures and difficulties.

**THE "OLD HOME HOUSE"**

Eleven stories about Cap'n Jonadab Wixon and Cap'n Barzilla Wingate, and their "Old Home House" for summer boarders.

**MR. PRATT**

Two young New Yorkers wish to lead the Natural Life, and Mr. Pratt gives them some pointers about it.

**CAP'N ERI**

Cap'n Eri and his two friends decide that one of them must marry to provide a housekeeper for the three, and they start on a series of genial adventures.



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