

5-1955

The Thomas Hart Benton Mural

Lincoln University, Jefferson City Missouri

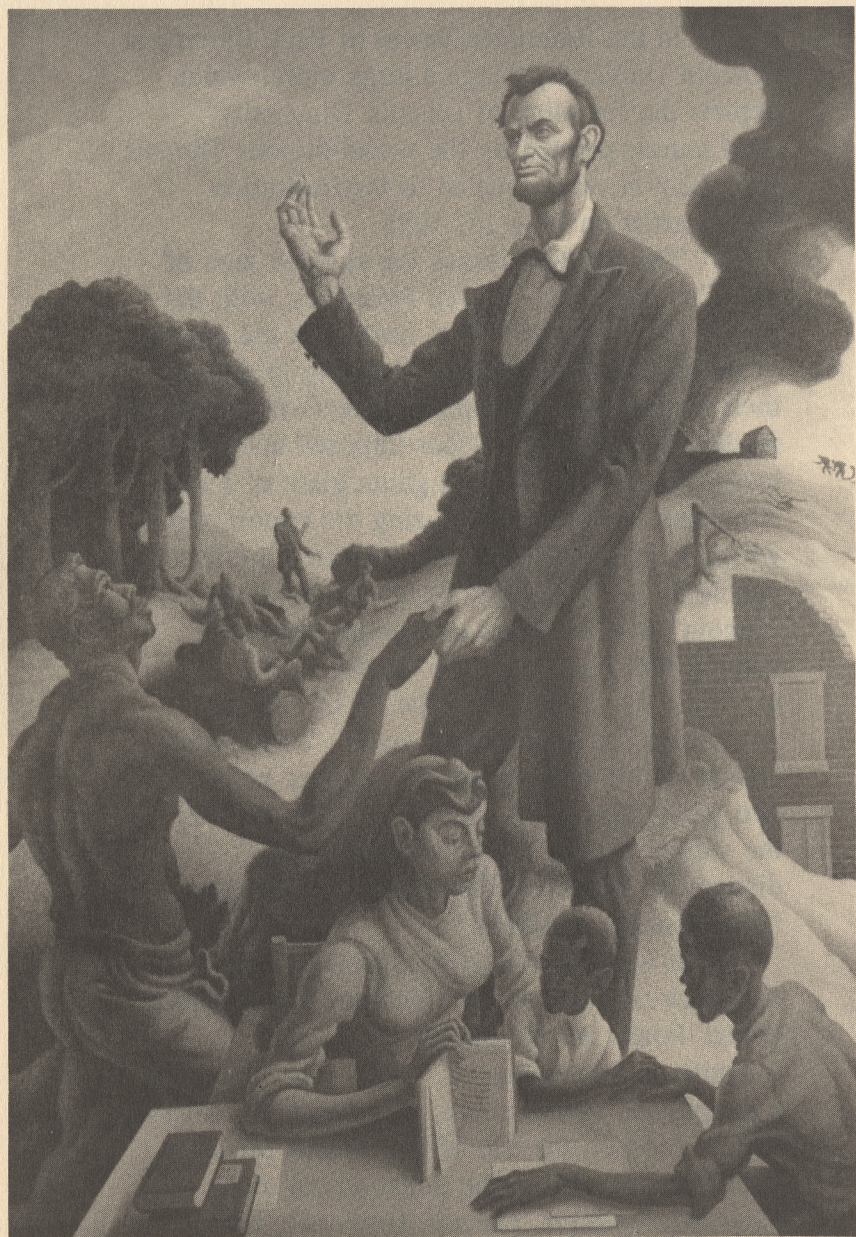
Follow this and additional works at: <https://bluetigercommons.lincolnu.edu/thb-lu>

Recommended Citation

Lincoln University, Jefferson City Missouri, "The Thomas Hart Benton Mural" (1955). *Thomas Hart Benton and Lincoln University*. 1. <https://bluetigercommons.lincolnu.edu/thb-lu/1>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the University Archives / Ethnic Studies Center at Blue Tiger Commons@LincolnU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Thomas Hart Benton and Lincoln University by an authorized administrator of Blue Tiger Commons@LincolnU. For more information, please contact MartinD2@lincolnu.edu.

THE THOMAS HART BENTON MURAL



THE THOMAS HART BENTON MURAL

In the Reference Room of Page Library at Lincoln University hangs a large mural which depicts the founding of Lincoln University. This mural, painted by the world-famous Thomas Hart Benton, was donated to the institution by the artist on May 15, 1955.

The painting shows the enlisted men of the 62nd and 65th Colored Infantries, with the rigors of war behind them, seated on the ground or on hastily-devised seats, listening to one of their leaders who is instructing them in the art of reading and writing. Super-imposed upon this background is the tall and gaunt giant of a man, Abraham Lincoln, symbolizing the opportunities which were extended to the African American people by the institution which bears his name. Lincoln holds the hand of a young man as if helping him rise above the condition of servitude which had been the lot of African Americans for hundreds of years. Two books appear on the table beside the teacher who helps two youngsters learn about their country, but the viewer is caught by the inability to distinguish between "The History of America," or "The History of Africa."

It was out of this background, caught by the brush of Thomas Hart Benton, that Richard Baxter Foster set up classes at Lincoln Institute on September 12, 1866. The place was a dilapidated school room, abandoned since 1847, which stood on the site of the present Missouri Pacific depot. From the donations of those Civil War soldiers, Lincoln University has emerged as an outstanding institution for service to the people of Missouri.