

# LINCOLN LORE

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## LINCOLN LORE

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The first copy of Lincoln Lore published in 1929 bore the date April 15, the day of the month on which Lincoln died. Week by week for the past two years this bulletin has sent forth some item which has contributed to the memory of Abraham Lincoln. This anniversary number again returns to the theme of the initial broadside, Lincoln's last day, as a timely subject for the issue in hand.

Schuyler Colfax has the honor of having been the first as well as the last official caller on this fatal day of Lincoln's life.

W. A. Howard, a Grand Rapids lawyer, who was in Washington on government business, has been named as Lincoln's forgotten Michigan caller. Hon. Cornelius Cole, of California, claims to have been with Speaker Colfax at the White House.

On the morning of the 14th, Lincoln is said to have received three Maryland callers: John A. Creswell, who was calling in the interest of a Confederate friend held prisoner, which prisoner was released by the famous "Let this be done," note; the Governor of the state, Bradford, who had endorsed Lincoln's second election emphatically, to the dissatisfaction of Horace Greeley and other newspaper publishers, who had asked his opinion.

Lincoln's third Maryland visitor was one John Gribbel, of Philadelphia, who also sought clemency for a younger brother who had ran away and joined the rebel army, and was now held prisoner, awaiting trial.

On the day of his assassination President Lincoln had composed a short speech in answer to the new British Minister's message on presenting his credentials and letters, and which speech was impressive in its dignity.

Lincoln's last official orders were mainly acts of mercy. He worked hard to clear up the docket of names of Federal prisoners, fearing that they "might come before harsher judges," and among his notes giving these prisoners their freedom is found the one which reads simply, "Let it be done"; also "Let the prisoner be released on taking the oath of December 8, 1863," the latter being a hastily written missive.

The desire of a rebel leader wishing to escape to the North without

punishment, and Lincoln's allowing him to do so over the protests of other members of the Cabinet, resulted in Lincoln's last recorded story, the one about the Irishman, who, after swearing temperance, wishes to know if just a drop be put in his more harmless drinks, "unbeknowst" to him.

A slave dealer's warrant for pardon was signed by Lincoln sometime during the day, and sent to the attorney general's office to be attested and executed.

### PROGRAM OF LINCOLN'S LAST DAY

- 7 A. M.—Arose.
- 7:30 A. M. to 8 A. M.—Transacts business in office.
- 8 A. M. to 9 A. M.—Breakfast; Robert home from front.
- 9 A. M. to 10 A. M.—Interview with Colfax, Cole & Howard.
- 10 A. M. to 10:30 A. M.—Interviews with Creswell, Hale, etc.
- 10:30 A. M. to 11 A. M.—Visit to War Dept.
- 11 A. M. to 1:30 P. M.—Cabinet meeting, Gen. Grant present.
- 1:30 P. M. to 2 P. M.—Light luncheon; at close sees Neill, Sec.
- 2 P. M. to 3 P. M.—In office; just before leaving sees Dana.
- 3 P. M. to 5 P. M.—Drive with Mrs. Lincoln and Tad.
- 5 P. M. to 6 P. M.—Relaxation in office with Illinois friends.
- 6 P. M. to 6:30 P. M.—Dinner; Brooks calls at close.
- 6:30 P. M. to 7 P. M.—Trip to War Department.
- 7 P. M. to 7:30 P. M.—Preparing for theatre.
- 7:30 P. M. to 8:30 P. M.—Interview with Colfax and Ashmun, etc.

The men to whom Lincoln granted interviews before dinner that evening were Governor Oglesby and Senator Yates, of Illinois; with them he had a long and pleasant visit. He read to them from the book of humor which he had chosen for that day, the subject and authorship of which has been an object of much debate since then, and is as yet unsettled.

Isaac N. Arnold, of Chicago, saw Lincoln just as he was stepping into his theatre carriage, and upon stating his errand, was answered: "Excuse me now. I am going to the theatre. Come and see me in the morning."

One of the last of Lincoln's autographs is supposed to have been attached to a note to the manager of the National Theatre, regretting his inability to accept an invitation to attend the latter's evening performance, because of the previous arrangements at Ford's; this note was given to R. L. Frasier, then an office boy, and presumably has been lost.

Among those signatures competing for honors is that note bidding Senator Stewart, of Nevada, to call with his friends at the White House the following morning; also the note to Edward H. Rollins, who sought his endorsement on a petition from New Hampshire. Rollins, upon hearing of Lincoln's death later that evening, did not present this petition, but kept it as a memento of the martyred President.

The note stating that "no pass is necessary now to authorize anyone to go to & return from Petersburg & Richmond. People go & return just as they did before the war," has, together with a lock of the President's hair, which was attached, passed into strange hands and been lost.

A document supposedly signed just before Lincoln left for the theatre was found lying open on his desk when the room was entered after the assassination; it was the appointment of Alvin Saunders as Governor of the Territory of Nebraska.

"Allow Mr. Ashmun & friend to come in at 9 A. M. tomorrow—" reads the note familiar to many students, which also puts in its claim as being Lincoln's last autograph, and is, according to most authorities, undoubtedly the last, as Ashmun, together with Colfax, Speaker of the House, was with the President approximately from 7:30 P. M. until his departure for the theatre.

Another claim for a "last signature" is the forgotten endorsement concerning the appointment of Milton Kelley, of Idaho, for the position of Associate Justice of the Supreme Court in that territory.

Among other acts granting pardons is that of the Union soldier appealing for the pardon of his Confederate brother held prisoner. The descendants of the prisoner, George Vaughan, of Canton, Missouri, say that after several appeals to higher courts, one of which won Lincoln's favor, Stanton still remained obdurate about the prisoner, and Senator Henderson, to whom Vaughan had appealed, called in desperation on the President that evening, and found him dressed for the theatre, but still willing to take time and sign the pardon giving freedom to Vaughan and several others: "Let these men take the oath of Dec. 8, 1863, and be discharged."

Lincoln was done receiving callers at 3 P. M., after which he went for a drive with Mrs. Lincoln. Senator Stewart, of Nevada, and Orville H. Browning called after this time, but did not send in their cards, preferring to return at 7 that evening. Having no appointment, they waited an hour and then departed.

#### Note:

"Further Light on Lincoln's Last Day," a recent publication by John W. Starr, Jr., has been closely consulted in gathering material for this monograph. The program of Lincoln's last day has been copied verbatim.