

LINCOLN LORE

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GIFTS FOR THE PRESIDENT

The Christmas season recalls some of the many gifts which Abraham Lincoln received as president-elect and chief executive of the nation. Soon after his election these favors began to arrive and they continued to be received at intervals throughout his administration. He is said to have remarked to his wife before they left Springfield for Washington, that regardless of what came out of his new office apparently they were going to get some new clothes.

Wearing apparel, however, represented but a very small part of the large number of gifts he received. Books and pictures were the most numerous expressions of appreciation and it seems as if he must have been on the mailing list for each new publication.

Overcoat

One of the earliest gifts of clothing he received was an overcoat from Isaac Fenno, to whom he wrote the following expression of thanks:

Springfield, Ill., Jany. 22, 1861

Isaac Fenno, Esq.
Dear Sir:

Your note of the 1st inst., together with a very substantial and handsome overcoat which accompanied it by Express, were duly received by me, and would both have been acknowledged sooner but for the multifarious demands upon my time and attention.

Permit me now to thank you sincerely for your elegant and valuable New Year's Gift, and the many kind expressions of personal confidence and regard contained in your letter.

Socks

Lincoln's relatives did not forget him as Christmas time approached and one of them, living in Indiana sent him a pair of socks. His acknowledgment of their receipt is written in the typical Lincoln style.

Executive Mansion, Washington, Dec. 4, 1861.

My Dear Madam:

I take great pleasure in acknowledging the receipt of your letter of Nov. 26; and in thanking you for the present by which it was accompanied. A pair of socks so fine, and soft, and warm, could hardly have been manufactured in any other way than the old Kentucky fashion. Your letter informs me that your maiden name was Crume, and that you were raised in Washington County, Kentucky, by which I infer that an uncle of mine by marriage was a relative of yours. Nearly or quite sixty years ago, Ralph Crume married Mary Lincoln, a sister of my father, in Washington County, Kentucky.

Muffler

Lincoln always deeply appreciated gifts from children and seldom failed to acknowledge these favors at the earliest possible moment. Two small girls, Clara and Julia Brown, sent him a muffler, which possibly they had made with their own hands. Their pictures were also enclosed. Lincoln wrote to them this kind letter of appreciation.

Executive Mansion,
Washington, March 2, 1864.

Misses Clara & Julia Brown:

The Afgan you sent is received, and gratefully accepted. I especially like my little friends; and although

you have never seen me, I am glad you remember me for the country's sake, and even more, that you remember, and try to help the poor soldiers.

Autograph Document

A grand-niece of John Hancock, living in New York, presented Lincoln with a rare document dated in 1765, signed by Hancock and endorsed by an Abraham Lincoln, contemporary with Hancock. The document had something to do with the rebuilding of Faniel Hall and it was suggested to the president by the donor that the document might prove "a happy augury of the country's future history—"The cradle of Liberty", rebuilt by the joint efforts of John Hancock and Abraham Lincoln."

Lincoln wrote thanking Mrs. Colyer, the donor, for the interesting document and "the flattering sentiment with which it was accompanied."

Canes

It would be very difficult, indeed, to make a complete list of all the canes which Lincoln had presented to him. Most of them had some personal or historical significance. A formal presentation program accompanied the gift of one received just before going to Gettysburg. It had formerly belonged to Senator David Colbert Broderick of California. The report of Mr. Lincoln's reply to Senator Conness, who presented the cane, follows in full as it appears to be an unpublished speech of the president:

"The president then accepted the cane, and, with much emotion, replied that he never personally knew the Senator's friend, Mr. Broderick, but he had always heard him spoken of as one sincerely devoted to the cause of human rights. Testimony to this point of his character had been borne by those whom he had not intimately known, as also by those whom he was personally and intimately acquainted, and, with all of them, the testimony had been uniform. The memento which was presented him by Senator Conness was of that class of things, the highest honor that could be conferred upon him. If, in the position he had been placed, he had done anything that entitled him to the honor the Senator had assigned him, it was a proud reflection that his acts were of such a character as to merit the affiliation of the friends of a man like David C. Broderick. Whether remaining in this world or looking down upon the earth from the spirit land, to be remembered by such a man as David C. Broderick was a fact he would remember through all the years of his life. The proudest ambition that he could desire was to do something for the elevation of the condition of his fellow men. In conclusion, he returned his sincere thanks for the part the Senator bore in this presentation, and to the memory of his great friend."

Royal Gifts

Some gifts sent to the president through their very nature were received by him as expressions of good will to the nation and these were properly deposited in the national museum. Lincoln acknowledged from the King of Siam, "a sword of costly materials and exquisite workmanship," and also two huge elephant tusks. The King likewise offered the president a herd of live elephants but these Mr. Lincoln refused because he felt they could not be properly cared for in this climate. It is likely, however, that his son Tad would have looked upon the gift of a herd of elephants with the same favor as he did rabbits, goats, ponies and other specimens of live stock which found their way to the White House.