

LINCOLN LORE

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DR. HENRY LAUDS MRS. LINCOLN, CHIDES SEC. CHASE

Subjects of current moment, which have pushed themselves to the front in Lincoln Lore during the past year, have crowded out human interest episodes relating to Lincoln and his family now available in the Lincoln Papers. The Foundation is fortunate in having microfilm copies of the more than 40,000 pieces in this remarkable collection at Washington and will share with the readers of this Bulletin during 1950 many items which will appear in print for the first time. One letter written by Dr. Anson G. Henry, formerly of Springfield, Ill., to Hon. Isaac Newton which found its way into the Lincoln Papers is presented in this issue as an introductory item.

Dr. A. G. Henry, the writer of the letter was five years older than Lincoln and was a leading Whig at Springfield when Abraham moved into the state capitol from New Salem. John T. Stuart, Lincoln's first law partner, received a letter from Lincoln in January, 1841, stating: "I have within the last few days, been making a most discreditable exhibition of myself in the way of hypochondriasm and thereby got an impression that Dr. Henry is necessary to my existence." From this time on Dr. Henry was a very close personal friend of Abraham Lincoln.

Dr. Henry was appointed Surveyor General of Washington Territory in 1861. He was in Washington, D. C. in February, 1863, and had an interview with Salmon P. Chase with respect to the removal of one of Chase's friends, Victor Smith, Collector of Customs of Puget Sound, who did not satisfy the people of the territory. The treasurer objected and pressure brought by the President caused Chase to resign but Lincoln refused to accept his resignation. Dr. Henry was back in Washington once again when Abraham Lincoln was assassinated and was very helpful to Mrs. Lincoln in a time of great stress. Dr. Henry himself was lost at sea en route to his home and Mrs. Lincoln wrote Mrs. Henry with respect to the feeling of the remaining members of the Lincoln family, on Dr. Henry's death, "We consider that we have lost our best and dearest friend."

John R. McBride, representative in Congress for the state of Oregon, in his reminiscing stated that Abraham Lincoln spoke of Dr. Henry in this complimentary manner: "Henry is one of the best men I have ever known. He sometimes commits an error of judgment, but I never knew him to be guilty of a falsehood or of an act beneath a gentleman. He is the soul of truth and honor."

The recipient of the letter to be featured in this issue of the bulletin, Hon. Isaac N. Newton, was Commissioner of Agriculture, appointed by President Lincoln in 1862.

Surveyor General's Office
Olympia W. T., April 21, 1864

Hon. Isaac Newton
Dear Sir:

While I was enjoying the kind hospitality of the White House last Spring I had a good deal of talk with Mrs. Lincoln about the slanderous reports in circulation about her and I found she was inclined to attribute them to Mr. Seward and his friends. I could not recollect having heard anything said of Mr. Lincoln or his wife from this quarter and I therefore suggested that they more likely emanated from the Treasury Department. I knew this to be so on the coast for I had traced many of them to the special friends of Sec. Chase, Victor Smith and Tom Brown, his special agent.

I send you enclosed a copy of a postscript (not in Lincoln papers) appended to the letter of Hon. Paul K.

Hubbs to Gov. Pickering, which letter you will find on Page 10 of the Pamphlet I send you, that gives you a practical illustration of the correctness of my opinion. I might give you many others but this is enough for my purpose which is to show you that the whole influence of Treasury Department has been and still continues to be used to disparage Mr. Lincoln in the public estimation by the circulation of scandalous libels over the country against him and his accomplished lady, through the agency of Special Agents. His pliant tool, Brown, has his headquarters in San Francisco which accounts for what was put in circulation there to Mrs. Lincoln's prejudice and which I took special pains to contradict in my return to this coast in June last.

I have known Mrs. Lincoln from her childhood up, and I can truly say that I have never been acquainted with a kinder and more estimable woman, and I regard it as an outrage upon all propriety and common decency to continue men in office who use their position and influence continually to depreciate the President and his family.

It would not be policy for the President to have an open rupture with the Secretary of the Treasury so near the close of his term and pending election but he certainly owes it to his personal dignity to require the prompt dismissal from the Public Service of all slanderers of his wife's fair name.

You can vouch for the entire reliability of Mr. Hubbs, therefore I call your attention to this matter in the hope that you will get it before Mr. Lincoln in a quiet way. The statement of Mr. Hubbs was not designed to go beyond Gov. Pickering but I know you will not abuse this confidence I repose in you. If Mr. Brown denies saying this to Mr. Hubbs, I can prove that he retracted this and other scandals in San Francisco and elsewhere.

It is now said here by the admirers of Mr. Chase that the President has been forced by Mrs. Lincoln to appoint Caleb Lyon, Governor of Idaho, a man that has not a single qualification for the position, simply because he had published one or two fulsome puffs of Mrs. Lincoln in the newspapers but that Senator Connes would defeat his confirmation in the Senate. How do they get these things?

The first I heard of the Pomeroy circular it was being scattered over the coast broadcast by Chase's friends. But thank God the hearts of the masses were too strongly wedded to Mr. Lincoln to be stolen from him by the trickery of professional politicians.

Mr. Chase has recently found this out and now he is trying to make capital for 1868 by loud professions of patriotism and friendships. Should Mr. Lincoln be elected (and I consider this morally certain) I trust Mr. Chase will not be continued in the Treasury Department.

No man who is a candidate for the Presidency has any business in the national councils. Mr. Chase has notoriously been making capital, or rather trying to, from the day he entered the cabinet up till now by stealthily undermining the slandering of Mr. Lincoln as a wise and sagacious statesman—by magnifying his own importance in the administration of the government and by the encouraging the circulation of lying scandals against the family.

Please present my kindest regards to your lady and to Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln.

Very Truly
Your Obedt. Servt.
A. G. Henry