



Lincoln Lore

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“JUDGE LYNCH”

Impetuous politicians sometimes make rash statements, and candidate Abraham Lincoln made an unguarded statement during the presidential campaign of 1860 which caused him considerable embarrassment.

The embarrassing situation came about as a result of the Railsplitter's correspondence with Samuel Haycraft of Elizabethtown, Kentucky. Haycraft, born in 1795, had served as the clerk of both circuit and county courts from 1816 until 1851. Retiring from the clerkship, he practiced law for four years and was again called to fill his old position until 1857, when he was elected to the State Senate. Being an inquiring historian, ("A History of Elizabethtown, Kentucky and Its Surroundings"—1869), Haycraft wrote Lincoln in the spring of 1860 for some biographical data, in order that he might determine the nominee's relation to Thomas Lincoln whom he had known many years ago in Hardin County.

Lincoln very graciously wrote an autobiographical letter to Haycraft on May 28 which contained significant data on his family history. The candidate then closed his letter with an invitation to further correspondence: "I am really very glad of your letter, and shall be pleased to receive another at any time."

Haycraft wrote Lincoln a second letter, dated May 31, suggesting that a visit to his birthplace might be pleasant. Lincoln replied on June 4 that "a visit to the place of my nativity might be pleasant to me. Indeed it would. But would it be safe? Would not the people lynch me?"

On August 7 a correspondent of the *New York Herald* visited Springfield, Illinois, and called on Lincoln at his home. There he found the Republican nominee, Mrs. Lincoln, and their two children, Willie and Tad, along with Mrs. Norman B. Judd, and Mrs. E. B. Washburne. The reporter wrote that "the ladies were especially entertaining" but that he and "Old Abe" each took a chair and talked upon the various issues of the day which were attracting the attention of the American people. In the course of their conversation, Lincoln, in an unguarded moment, mentioned his reply to Haycraft's suggestion that he visit Kentucky, and he restated his question, "Would not the people lynch me?"

With the story of "Judge Lynch" appearing in the *New York Herald* on August 13, Lincoln felt under obligation to write Haycraft a letter of explanation:

"Springfield, Ills. Aug. 16, 1860

"My dear Sir:

"A correspondent of the *New York Herald*, who was here a week ago, writing to that paper, represents me as saying I had been invited to visit Kentucky, but that I suspected it was a trap to inveigle me into Kentucky, in order to do violence to me.

"This is wholly a mistake. I said no such thing. I do not remember, but possibly I did mention my correspondence with you. But very certainly I was not guilty of stating, or insinuating, a suspicion of any intended violence, deception, or other wrong, against me, by you, or any other Kentuckian. Thinking this *Herald* correspondence might fall under your eye, I think it due to myself to enter my protest against the correctness of this part of it. I scarcely think the correspondent was malicious; but rather that he misunderstood what was said.

"Yours very truly
A. Lincoln."

Alarmed over the adverse political reaction that would ensue from the *New York Herald's* report of his remark about "a lynching in Kentucky if he should visit there," Lincoln wrote George G. Fogg, of the Republican National Committee. He requested Fogg to insert in the *Herald* an anonymous correction, which Lincoln drafted as follows:

"CORRECTION

"We have such assurance as satisfies us that our correspondent writing from Springfield, Ills., under date of Aug. 8—was mistaken in representing Mr. Lincoln as expressing a suspicion of a design to inveigle him into Kentucky for the purpose of doing him violence. Mr. Lincoln neither entertains, nor has intended to express any such suspicion."

The "Correction" was enclosed with the following letter to George C. Fogg, residing at the Astor House in New York City:

"PRIVATE

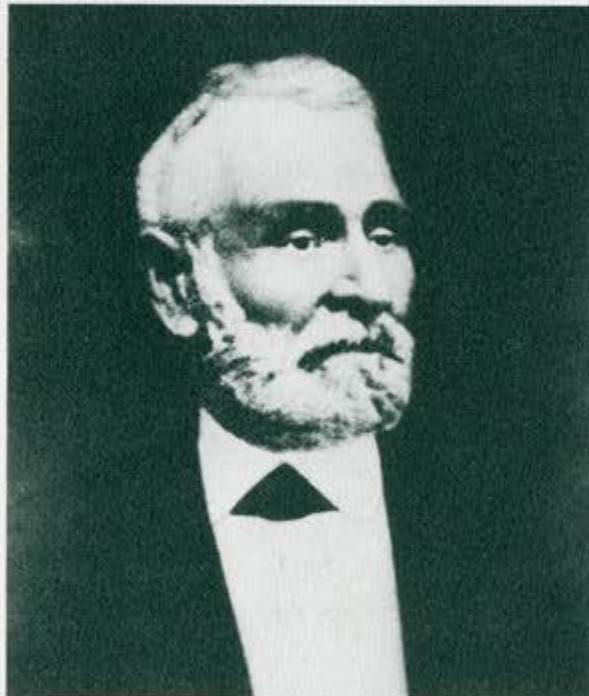
"Hon. George G. Fogg—

Springfield, Ills.

"My dear Sir:

"I am annoyed some by the printed paragraph below, in relation to myself, taken from the *New York Herald's* correspondence from this place of August 8th.

"He had, he said, on one occasion been invited to go into Kentucky and revisit some of the scenes with whose history his father in his lifetime had been identified. On asking by letter whether Judge



Samuel Haycraft

Taken in September 1877, in his 83d year.

Lynch would be present, he received no response; and he therefore came to the conclusion that the invitation was a trap laid by some designing person to inveigle him into a slave State for the purpose of doing violence to his person.

"This is decidedly wrong. I did not say it. I do not impugn the correspondent. I suppose he misconceived the statement from the following incident. Soon after the Chicago nomination I was written to by a highly respectable gentleman of Hardin County, Ky., inquiring if I was a son of Thomas Lincoln, whom he had known long ago, in that county. I answered that I was, and that I was myself born there. He wrote again, and, among other things, (did not invite me but) simply inquired if it would not be agreeable to me to revisit the scenes of my childhood. I replied, among other things, 'It would indeed; but would you not Lynch me?' He did not write again.

"I have, playfully, (and never otherwise) related this incident several times; and I suppose I did so to the Herald correspondent, though I do not remember it. If I did, it is all that I did say, from which the correspondent could have inferred his statement.

"Now, I dislike, exceedingly, for Kentuckians to understand that I am charging them with a purpose to inveigle me, and do violence to me. Yet I can not go into the newspapers. Would not the editor of the Herald, upon being shown this letter, insert the short correction, which you find upon the inclosed scrap?

"Please try him, unless you perceive some sufficient reason to the contrary. In no event, let my name be publicly used. Yours very truly

A. Lincoln."

Haycraft, on August 19, replied to Lincoln's letter of August 16, stating that he understood full well the "playfulness" of his statement in the letter of June 4. He wrote: "No man of sense would have understood it in any other way than a little playfulness & pleasantry on your part. I at least understood it, and was about to reply to you in the same humor that a visit here would subject you to a good many attacks. But they would be for office under you, as it was regarded as a foregone conclusion that you would be the next president unless the split in the Democratic party let in Bell."

Haycraft was apprehensive lest Lincoln might think the story had reached the New York correspondent through him. He explained: "The mark private in your letter I suppose simply means that it was not for publication, had it been marked confidential no body would have seen it." However, Haycraft did admit that: "As it was I showed it to Mr. W. B. Read who was attending our court & one other acquaintance & spoke of it to others who like myself had a curiosity about your birthplace. The reason why I did not reply was through a little delicacy, lest my object might be misconstrued."

Continuing his long letter, the circuit court clerk wrote: "I do not suppose that you intend to visit Ky. But if you do I would like to see you personally and would be sure that you would be pleasantly received. I wish it understood that this letter is private & not for publication, but if you desire a reply from me to the N. Y. Herald I will with pleasure prepare a statement."

Haycraft's letter prompted Lincoln to write him again on the 23rd:

"Springfield, Ill.
Aug. 12, 1860

"My dear Sir:

"Yours of the 19th is just received. I now fear I may have given you some uneasiness by my last letter. I did not mean to intimate that I had, to any extent, been involved, or embarrassed, by you; nor yet, to draw from you anything to relieve myself from difficulty. My only object was to assure you that I have not, as represented by the Herald correspondent, charged you with an attempt to inveigle me into Kentucky to do me violence. I believe no such thing of you, or of Kentuckians generally; and I dislike to be represented to them as slandering them in that way.

Yours truly
A. Lincoln."

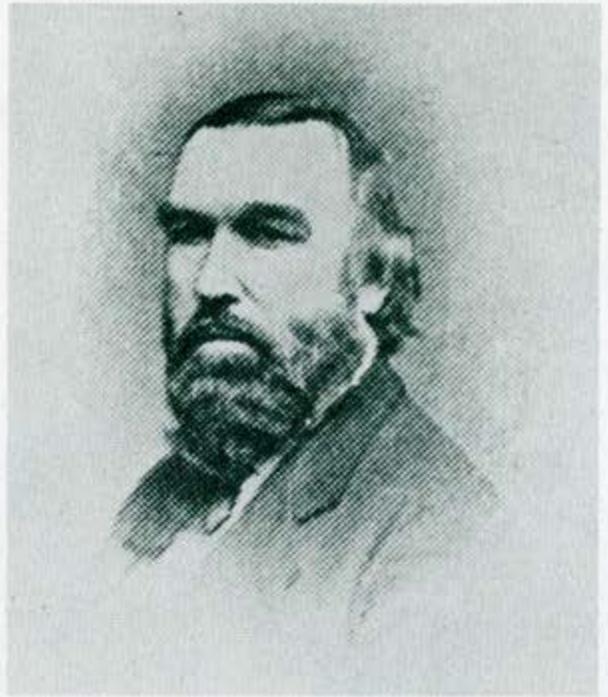


Photo Courtesy of Elwin L. Page

George Gilman Fogg

On August 23, the same day that Lincoln wrote Haycraft, Fogg wrote Lincoln in answer to his letter of August 16. The Republican National Committeeman reported that he had called on the *Herald* editor, James G. Bennett. The editor was inclined to Lincoln personally, and he would permit the correction to appear over Fogg's name. If this was not agreeable, Bennett would accept any responsible name, or he would run the correction if it was dated at Springfield without a name. But, he would not allow it to appear editorially or by a correspondent. This would be admitting an error. Nevertheless, the *Herald* would admit the error, if Lincoln would make the request. Fogg wisely decided that under such stipulations the correction would not be desirable. Norman Judd, who was visiting in New York at the time, was also inclined to agree that the price was too much to pay for the correction.

In concluding his letter, Fogg had good reports of New York politically, and it was his opinion that Edwin D. Morgan was the strongest nominee for governor of New York that could be made.

Still smarting from this encounter with the press, but at the same time appreciative of his New York friend's efforts, Lincoln wrote Fogg on August 29th:

"Hon. George G. Fogg. Springfield, Ills.
"My dear Sir Aug. 29, 1860.

"Yours of the 23rd. was only received yesterday evening.

"You have done precisely right in that matter with the Herald. Do nothing further about it. Although it wrongs me, and annoys me some, I prefer letting it run its course, to getting into the papers over my own name. I regret the trouble it has given you, and thank you also for having performed your part so cheerfully and correctly.

"What you say of the Empire state is of a piece with all the news I receive from there. The whole field appears reasonably well.

"Yours very truly
A. Lincoln"

The story ran its course, and in the November election Lincoln received in Hardin County six out of 2,091 votes cast. In Elizabethtown, where Haycraft resided, the only citizen to cast his vote for Lincoln was Robert L. Wintersmith, Sr., whose reward was the appointment to the office of postmaster through the intercession of Haycraft. Needless to state, the *New York Herald* article in no way affected the balloting in Hardin County, Kentucky.

LINCOLN POSTAGE STAMPS—
ISSUE OF 1890-1893



222
Issue 1890-93



254
Issue 1894-99

During the years 1890-1893, the Post Office Department issued, as one of its ordinary postage stamps, a four cent, dark brown Lincoln stamp which was first placed on sale, June 2, 1890. The Lincoln head faces three-quarters right and is from the portrait made by John H. Littlefield.

The stamp is described as follows: "Four-cent—portrait of Abraham Lincoln, after a photograph from life, three-quarters face, looking to the right. The surroundings of the medallion are the same as the 1-cent stamp (Franklin), with the necessary change of figures and letters representing the denomination. Color dark brown. Issued June 2, 1890."

The stamp bears the catalogue number of 222. It is similar to the 1870-83 issues and measures 19 x 22 mm. This issue is without triangles in the upper corners, and was printed by the American Bank Note Company.

THE 1894-1899 ISSUE

In July 1894, the manufacture of stamps was assumed by the Treasury Department, and the four-cent Lincoln stamp appeared in a velvet brown color. The first day of issue was September 11, 1894, and the stamp appeared on watermarked paper after June 5, 1895. The design was practically the same as the 1890-93 issue except for triangular ornaments in the upper angles.

The four-cent Lincoln stamps with the triangular ornaments are catalogued as follows:

- 254 —Dark brown (Unwmkd.)
- 254a—Imperf. (Unwmkd.)
- 269 —Dark brown (Wmkd.)
- 280 —Rose brown (Wmkd.)
- 280a—Lilac brown (Wmkd.)
- 280b—Orange brown (Wmkd.)

See Post Office Department: A Description of United States Postage Stamps, pages 23-24, and 27-28. 1955

THE GATLING GUN

In 1861 Dr. Richard J. Gatling, of Indianapolis, Indiana, invented an "improved" machine gun. Acting upon the suggestion of Colonel R. A. Maxwell "that a special objective weapon was needed" by the United States government to suppress the rebellion, the multibarreled, crank-operated gun was constructed and first tested in the spring of 1862. It could fire 200 shots per minute. The six revolving barrels were rifled, and the calibre was 58/100 inches. The gun used steel chargers with paper cartridges. With complete equipment, Gatling's invention was manufactured to sell for approximately \$1,000.

This "improved" weapon was viewed with indifference by the Bureau of Ordnance, and it was not officially adopted by the United States Army until August 24, 1866, even though a few experimental Gatling guns saw service during the Civil War.

On June 15, 1877 Gatling wrote Miss Lizzie Jarvis from Hartford explaining why he invented the Gatling gun. This original letter in the Foundation files follows: "It may be interesting to you to know how I came to invent the gun which bears my name; I will tell you: In 1861, during the opening events of the war

(residing at the time in Indianapolis, Ind.) I witnessed almost daily the departure of troops to the front and the return of the wounded, sick and dead. The most of the latter lost their lives not in battle, but by sickness and exposure incident to the service. It occurred to me if I could invent a machine—a gun—which could by its rapidity of fire, enable one man to do as much battle duty as a hundred, that it would, to a great extent supersede the necessity of large armies, and consequently, exposure to battle and disease be greatly diminished. I thought over the subject and finally this idea took practical form in the invention of the Gatling Gun."

Perhaps, Gatling could have gotten the immediate acceptance of his gun for service in the Civil War, if he had directly contacted President Lincoln in 1862. Hampered by red tap and bureaucratic apathy, he waited until February 18, 1864 to take up with Lincoln the matter of the adoption of his invention: "Pardon me for the liberty I have taken in addressing you this letter.

"I enclose herewith a circular giving a description of the 'Gatling Gun' of which I am the inventor and patentee.

"The arm in question, is an invention of no ordinary



The Gatling Gun

"It was during this invasion of (Kentucky in September, 1862) by the rebel forces (under Bragg) that I first heard of the 'Gatling Gun,' the rebel troops telling us of a gun the 'Yanks' used in the battle of Richmond, Kentucky, where they would hitch a horse to the gun, start on a gallop, turn a crank, and the bullets flew almost as thick as hail, mowing down the rebel lines. They could not understand it, and wanted to know if we could tell them anything about the infernal machine." Felix G. Stidger, *Treason History of the Order of Sons of Liberty*, Chicago, 1903, p. 21.

character. It is regarded, by all who have seen it operate, as the most effective implement of warfare invented during the war and it is just the thing needed to aid in crushing the present rebellion.

"The gun is very simple in its construction; strong and durable and can be used effectively by men of ordinary intelligence.

"The gun, was months ago, tested at the Washington Navy Yard and gave entire satisfaction to the officers who attended the trial, and it was adopted by the Naval Bureau with the understanding that any requisitions for the guns made by naval officers would be allowed, since which time a number of requisitions have been sent in for the guns by different naval officers, but none of said requisitions have been granted to my knowledge.

"Genl. Banks, commanding at New Orleans, has also made requisitions for a number of the guns to be placed on transport vessels in his department, where they would be found, no doubt, very serviceable. Many other army officers are very anxious to obtain the guns.

"Messrs. McWhinney & Rindge,—partners of mine in the sale of the gun—are now in Washington with a sample gun and I hope ere long to hear of its adoption by the War Department. Its use, will, undoubtedly, be of great service to our armies now in the field.

"May I ask your kindly aid and assistance in getting the gun in use? I know of a truth that it will do good and effective service.

"Such an invention, at a time like the present, seems to be providential, to be used as a means in crushing the rebellion."

In closing his letter to Lincoln, Gatling wrote the following postscript: "I have seen an inferior arm known as the 'Coffee Mill Gun' which I am informed has not given satisfaction in practical tests on the battlefield. I assure you my invention is no 'Coffee Mill Gun'—but is entirely a different arm, and is entirely free from the accidents and objections raised against that arm."

Lincoln had advocated the adoption of the "Coffee Mill" gun as early as 1861, and as the war progressed he became interested in other machine guns. But, by the time he received Gatling's letter, he "had lost his zeal for new weapons." Apparently, Lincoln did not answer Gatling, as no communication from the president to the inventor has been discovered.

Robert V. Bruce, in his excellent book, *Lincoln and the Tools of War*, made the observation that: "Thanks to Lincoln, machine guns were no longer 'new-fangled gimcracks'" and despite Gatling's claims to the contrary, his "1862 model was built fundamentally on the coffee-mill principle, even to its separate steel chambers and hopper feed." Gatling profited from the similarity of his gun with the "Coffee Mill," because it saw action and the Gatling patent was an "improved" weapon, and not a "new" weapon. To an ordnance bureaucrat of the 1860's, that made a difference.



Lincoln Valentine
"Forget me not"

PAPER CURRENCY FEATURING LINCOLN

The Bureau of Engraving and Printing has certified proof impressions of the following United States paper currency, which features an engraving of Abraham Lincoln as the central figure or as one of the central figures:

\$100 Treasury Note	1869		
\$100 United States Note, authorized by Act of Congress March 3, 1863	1875	1878	1880
\$500 Gold Certificate	1870	1875	Dept.*
*Authorized by Act of Congress July 12, 1882—Department Series only. Series 1870 and 1875 authorized by Act of Congress March 3, 1863			
\$5 United States Note (legal tender)	1928	1928A	1928B
	1928C	1928D	1928E
	1928F	1953	
\$5 Silver Certificate	1923	1934	1934A
	1934B	1934C	1934D
	1953		
\$5 Federal Reserve Currency, authorized by Federal Reserve Act December 23, 1913.		1915	1918
\$5 Federal Reserve Note, authorized by Federal Reserve Act December 23, 1913.	1914	1928	1928A
	1928B	1928C	1928D
	1934	1934A	1934B
	1934C	1934D	1950
Note: 1928C series printed for Cleveland, San Francisco and Atlanta districts only. Series 1928D printed for Atlanta only. Series 1934B printed for all districts except Dallas.			
\$5 Federal Reserve Bank (National Currency)		1929	
Note: This issue printed for all districts except Richmond.			
\$5 National Bank Note			1929
\$1 Silver Certificate, authorized by Act of Congress August 4, 1866. Portrait of Lincoln and Grant in face design.			1899
50¢ Fractional Currency, Fourth Issue, authorized by Act of Congress March 3, 1863 and June 30, 1864. Issued from July 14, 1869 to February 16, 1875.			
\$20 One Year Interest Bearing Note, authorized by Act of Congress March 3, 1863.			
\$20 Compound Interest Note, authorized by Acts of Congress March 3, 1863 and June 30, 1864.			

The following notes also have the portrait of Lincoln in the face design, and each issue, as far as can be determined from available data, was engraved and printed by a private bank note company for the Treasury Department.

\$10 Demand Note, authorized by Acts of Congress July 17, 1861 and August 5, 1861. Notes dated August 10, 1861.
\$10 United States Note (legal tender), First Issue, authorized by Act of Congress February 25, 1862. Notes dated March 10, 1862.
\$10 United States Note (legal tender), Third Issue, Authorized by Act of Congress March 3, 1863. Notes dated March 10, 1863.

This information was compiled through the courtesy of the Treasury Department, Bureau of Engraving and Printing, Washington, 25, D. C.

The Numismatist for February, 1924, pages 171-175, contains an article entitled "Obsolete Paper Money with Portrait of Lincoln" by D. C. Wismer. This article deals with State bank notes, miscellaneous paper currency, advertising notes and novelties.