



Lincoln Lore

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SCHUYLER COLFAX—LINCOLN LECTURER

Schuyler Colfax of South Bend, Indiana, is so well known in history as a Congressman, Speaker of the House, Vice President (U. S. Grant's first term) and for his implication in the Cr dit Mobilier scandal that few students know of his activities as a professional lecturer.

Colfax was a brilliant young man who showed great promise. Not only did he excell as a shrewd politician but he was an excellent speaker. On June 21, 1856 he made a speech, of which more than a million copies were

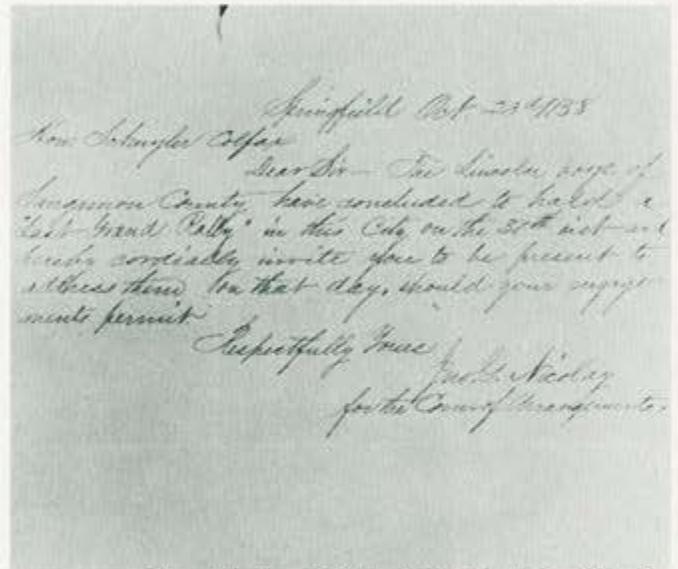


From the Lincoln National Life Foundation Collection

SCHUYLER COLFAX

Mar. 23, 1823—Jan. 13, 1885

Vice-president of the United States. Born in New York City. His paternal grandfather, William Colfax, was commander of Washington's body-guard during the Revolutionary War. His maternal grandmother, Hester Schuyler, was a cousin of Gen. Philip Schuyler. His father, Schuyler Colfax, who married (April 15, 1820) Hannah Stryker of New York, died Oct. 30, 1822 and in 1834 his mother married George W. Matthews of Baltimore. In 1836 the family moved to New Carlisle, Ind., where Matthews, who became Auditor of St. Joseph County in 1841, appointed his stepson deputy auditor at South Bend, Indiana. This Indiana city was the place of his official residence the remainder of his life. His first wife, Evelyn Clark of New York, whom he married Oct. 10, 1844 died at Newport, R. I., July 10, 1863. On Nov. 18, 1868, he married Ellen W. Wade, a niece of Benjamin F. Wade of Ohio. He died suddenly at Mankato, Minn., and was buried at South Bend.



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation Collection

Letter written by John G. Nicolay, October 23, 1858, inviting Colfax to speak in Springfield, Illinois on October 30th. Apparently Colfax's engagements would not permit his acceptance of this invitation.

said to have been circulated, opposing the use of the army in Kansas until the laws of the Territory should have received congressional approval.

In 1858, the year of the Lincoln-Douglas debates, his services as a political speaker were in demand. The following letter in the Lincoln National Life Foundation collection is of interest:

Springfield, Oct. 23, 1858

Hon. Schuyler Colfax

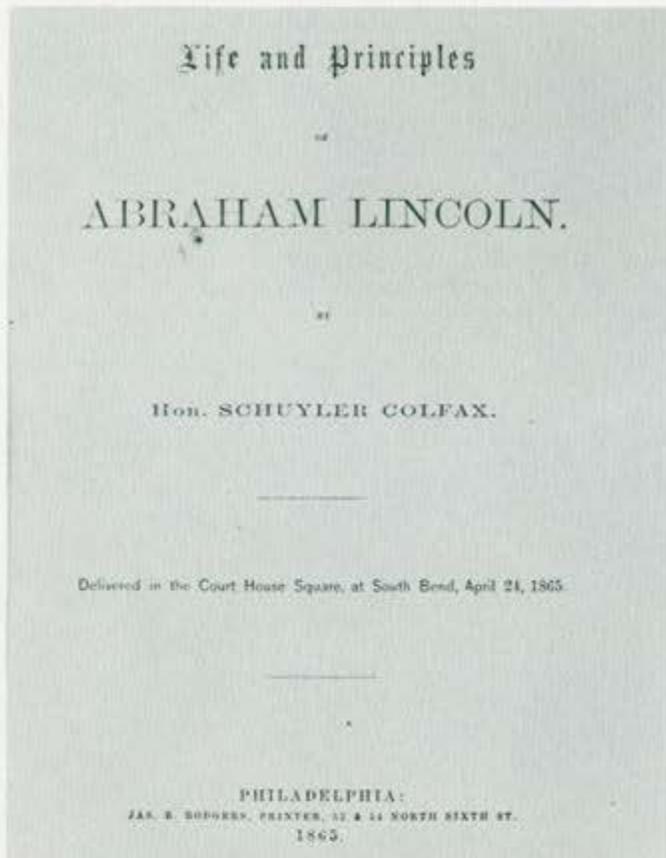
Dear Sir—The Lincoln boys of Sangamon County have concluded to hold a "Last Grand Rally" in this city on the 30th inst and hereby cordially invite you to be present to address them on that day, should your engagements permit.

Respectfully Yours

Jno. G. Nicolay
for the Com. of Arrangements

The great Republican rally, which closed the canvass, did take place on October 30th in Springfield, but whether or not Colfax accepted the invitation remains uncertain. Certainly if this young congressman had attended Lincoln would have greeted him warmly. A *Chicago Tribune* reporter wrote that "speaking was out of the question. Lincoln tried it, and though he held at all times an audience of 5,000 or more, something more demonstrative than his convincing and unimpassioned oratory was needed to satisfy the larger crowd."

Evidence available indicates that Colfax did not attend the "Last Grand Rally" at Springfield. On July 6, 1859 Lincoln wrote to Colfax a political letter stating that



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation Collection

Title page of address by Colfax published after Lincoln's assassination in 1865. (See M 457). Fish noted 1,000 copies, and also states that this was reprinted in A. Y. Moore's "The Life of Schuyler Colfax," Philadelphia 1868. Monaghan makes the following comments concerning this address: "A personal friend reminisces; blames the South for the first assassination of a ruler in the United States—a fitting climax for the mutilators and bone-carvers of Bull Run, the murders of women and children in burning hotels, the systematic starvers of military prisoners."

he sought "to hedge against divisions in the Republican ranks generally, and particularly for the contest of 1860." He said he was particularly concerned with "the movement against foreigners in Massachusetts, in New Hampshire, to make obedience to the Fugitive Slave law, punishable as a crime; in Ohio, to repeal the Fugitive Slave law; and squatters sovereignty in Kansas." In the same letter Lincoln stated that he had "a strong desire to make your personal acquaintance." Then, too, there is some evidence of alleged pro-Douglas proclivities on the part of Colfax in 1858.

A few years later Colfax's public career enabled him to enjoy many personal contacts with Abraham Lincoln. He entered the House of Representatives of the Thirty-fourth Congress (1855-1857) as a Republican, and served continuously until the end of the Fortieth Congress (March 3, 1869). From the Thirty-eighth to the Fortieth Congress inclusive (1863-1869) he was Speaker of the House.

Lincoln must have known Colfax by reputation at an early date, because at the age of twenty-one the Indiana politician made speeches for Clay in 1844, and was Secretary of the Chicago River and Harbor Convention in 1847—a meeting which the Illinois Congressman-elect attended. Colfax also served as a delegate to the Whig National Convention of 1848 and 1852. When the Republican party was formed Colfax was one of the first to join it and he took an active part in organizing the new party in Indiana.

Colfax supported Lincoln for the presidency and on the day of his nomination he wrote to the candidate that: "your name was the most hopeful, around which to rally in the doubtful states." This prompted an exchange of letters between the two men and Colfax made some

suggestions concerning strategic political moves in regard to the forthcoming election. On the other hand, Lincoln sometimes mentioned Colfax's name in his own correspondence.

This close relationship caused Colfax to desire a cabinet appointment. Because his longest and most important service, prior to the Speakership, was as Chairman of the Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads his friends strongly urged his appointment as Postmaster-General. Lincoln, however, had only one cabinet appointment available for an Indiana politician and that man was the fifty-two year old Caleb Blood Smith who became Secretary of the Interior. Nevertheless, the sixteenth president soothed the disappointed Colfax with the statement that, "you were most honorably and amply recommended; and a tender of the appointment was not withheld on any ground disparaging to you . . . When you were brought forward I said 'Colfax is a young man—is already in position—is running a brilliant career, and is sure of a bright future in any event.'"

During Lincoln's administration Colfax made occasional calls on the president. On May 8, 1861 he impressed upon Lincoln the necessity of "placing arms, artillery etc., along the Ohio River, particularly on the borders of Indiana and Illinois." Like all politicians Colfax made occasional requests of the president for appointments of political friends. On March 24, 1862 in an important letter on administration policy addressed to Horace Greeley, Lincoln mentioned "Mr. Colfax." Likewise, certain formal correspondence of both a political and social nature was exchanged between the two men, due to Colfax's position as Speaker of the House.

These intimate contacts with the sixteenth president proved invaluable to Colfax during his long years of political retirement, when he became one of the recognized lecturers on the martyred president. Perhaps Colfax best remembered his last meeting with Lincoln on Friday, April 14, 1865. Their topic of conversation was about "the policy to be adopted by the administration" toward the South. Lincoln also mentioned his recent visit to Richmond. Colfax was planning a western trip—all the way to California and Lincoln regretted that he could not accompany him. Colfax quoted the president as saying:

"I have very large ideas of the mineral wealth of our Nation. I believe it practically inexhaustible. It abounds all over our Western country from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific; and its development has scarcely commenced. During the war, when we were adding a couple of million dollars every day to our National Debt, I did not care about encouraging the increase in the volume of our precious metals. We had the country to save first. But, now that the Rebellion is overthrown, and we know pretty nearly the amount of our Debt, the more gold and silver we mine makes the payment of that Debt so much easier.

"Now I am going to encourage that in every possible way. We shall have hundreds of thousands of disbanded soldiers; and many have feared that their return home in such great numbers might paralyze industry, furnishing suddenly a greater supply of labor than there will be demand for. I am going to try to attract them to this hidden wealth of our mountain ranges, where there is room enough for all.

"Immigration, which even the War has not stopped, will land upon our shores hundreds of thousands more per year from overcrowded Europe. I intend to point them to the gold & silver that waits for them in the West. Tell the miners for me that I shall promote their interests to the utmost of my ability; because their prosperity is the prosperity of the Nation. We shall prove in a very few years that we are indeed the Treasury of the World."

Later that fateful day Speaker Colfax called on Lincoln again, shortly before he and Mrs. Lincoln departed for Ford's Theatre. Lincoln called to Colfax, "Don't forget Colfax, to tell those miners that that is my speech to them, by you"—. Colfax told Lincoln goodbye and departed.

With the assassination and death of Lincoln, Colfax wrote a speech entitled "Life and Principles of Abraham Lincoln" which he delivered in the Court House Square at South Bend, on April 24, 1865. This same speech was delivered at Bryon Hall in Chicago, on April 30th, 1865.

associations, and he was eager to contact individuals who generally manage lectures in local communities.

One of these press notices in the Foundation collection bears this notation in Colfax's handwriting:

"Dr Sir: at Mr. Foster's request, I send you terms for Lecture. He desires me also to name a date to (s). I could name next Tuesday, Nov. 27th, night before—. But if you prefer some other date, & let me know soon that terms are satisfactory, we could doubtless agree mutually on a different date.

Respy Yours
Schuyler Colfax
South Bend, Ind."

Some of the press notices are most complimentary. The Valparaiso, Indiana *Messenger-Democrat* carried this story:

"Mr. Colfax delivered his celebrated lecture upon the life and character of Abraham Lincoln to a very large audience last Friday evening. And, notwithstanding the bad roads and inclemency of the weather, many of his old constituents came for miles from the surrounding country, and remained over night in order to hear him. The speaker was very handsomely introduced by the Hon. D. F. Skinner, State Senator from this district, a life-long democrat, but a warm friend of Mr. Colfax's, in which he paid the speaker a warm, personal tribute full of cordial good will. The audience was largely composed of men prominent in both political parties, Democrats and Republicans alike vieing with each other in their demonstrations of applause and satisfaction with the lecture. It was elevated above all political partisanship, and so condensed that a hearer can learn more in one hour and a third of that historic era, and of the inner life and personal characteristics of the great central figure of that eventful era than in days of reading; fully half of it being personal incidents and illustrations not to be found in print at all, but condensed and presented from Mr. Colfax's own personal knowledge and intimacy with Mr. Lincoln. And it could not but be gratifying to the speaker to see so many in his audience, who, for a life time had been politically antagonistic to him, uniting with his warmest partisan friends in their heartiest applause."

Another press notice from the Monongahala City, Pennsylvania, Republican follows:

"He spoke under the auspices of the G. A. R. to an audience which listened with intense interest . . . The audience comprised all shades of politics, and here we may say that though Mr. Colfax has been and still is a strong Republican, there is not a sentiment in his admirable lecture that can give offense to any ear. Mr. Colfax was born in New York City, March 23, 1823. He was therefore, still a young man when called to the vice-presidency, and this fact stands out still more apparent when we remember that so many of the great men about whom he talked so familiarly last night have passed away—Lincoln, Seward, Chase, Stanton, Thad Stevens, Douglas, Garfield—all and many distinguished others, gone before. It is certainly a rare treat to hear one speak of these men whom he knew, and who made history in the dark days of the 'Sixties. Mr. Colfax is thoroughly a gentleman who has never stooped to the level of lower politics; he has a mild persuasive voice, and earnest and eloquent declamation. His life has been that of a true, honest, manly man."

McMurtry's Speaking Itinerary

Knoxville, Tennessee January 12, 13, 1961.
Memphis, Tennessee January 16—18.
Chattanooga, Tennessee January 19, 20.
Atlanta, Georgia January 31, February 1.
Charlotte, North Carolina February 2, 3.
Birmingham, Alabama February 6—8.
Shreveport, Louisiana February 9, 10.
Baton Rouge, Louisiana February 13, 14.
New Orleans, Louisiana February 15—17.
Jacksonville, Florida February 20-22.
Miami, Florida February 23, 24.

The persons who might be interested in learning of the schedule in detail in the various cities named above, may contact the general agency offices of The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company.

CUMULATIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY—1960

Selections approved by a Bibliography Committee consisting of the following members: Arnold Gates, 289 New Hyde Park Road, Garden City, N. Y.; Carl Haverlin, 2 Masterson Road, Bronxville, N. Y.; E. B. Long, 708 North Kenilworth Ave., Oak Park, Ill.; Richard F. Lufkin, 45 Milk Street, Boston, 9, Mass.; Wayne C. Temple, Lincoln Memorial University, Harrogate, Tenn.; Ralph G. Newman, 18 East Chestnut Street, Chicago 11, Ill.; William H. Townsend, 310 First National Bank Bldg., Lexington 3, Ky.; and Clyde C. Walton, Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Ill.

New items available for consideration may be sent to the above addresses or to the Lincoln National Life Foundation.

—ARABIC—

UNITED STATES INFORMATION SERVICE 1960-50

(Lincoln photo showing broken photographer's plate)/United States Information Service Lincoln Exhibition/Produced by the Yale University School of Art and Architecture for the United States Information Service. Pamphlet, paper, 8½" x 10½", 23 pp., 13 pp., illus. Contains 36 panels with explanation and illustrations. Published in Cairo, Egypt. Printed in Arabic and in English.

ANGLE, PAUL M. & MIERS, EARL SCHENCK 1960-51

Fire the Salute!/Abe Lincoln Is Nominated!/Murat Halstead Reports/The Republican National Convention/in Chicago, May 16, 17, & 18, 1860/Edited with Notes and an Introduction by/Paul M. Angle & Earl Schenck Miers/Centennial Edition/Kingsport, Tennessee/Private-ly Printed by Kingsport Press, Inc./1960.

Brochure, cloth, 7" x 10½", v p., 68 pp., fr., illus., boxed. Presentation copy, none for sale.

LINCOLN MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY 1960-52

Lincoln Memorial University Press/Summer 1960/Vol. 62, No. 2/Lincoln Herald/A Magazine devoted to historical/research in the field of Lincolniana and the Civil War, and to the promotion/of Lincoln Ideals in American/Education.

Pamphlet, flexible boards, 7" x 10", 97-136 pp., illus.

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF BOOKPLATE COLLECTORS 1960-53

Year Book 1958/of the American Society of Bookplate Collectors and Designers./Washington D. C./[device]/Volume Twenty-nine/Published by the Society/Printed for Members only/at the University Press of Sewanne, Tennessee. 1960.

Pamphlet, flexible boards, 7¼" x 10", 26 pp., illus., fr. Contains Lincolniana Bookplates by Louis J. Bailey. Limited to 250 copies.

BELTING, NATALIA M. 1960-54

Indy and Mr. Lincoln/(sketch of pig)/Written by Natalia M. Belting/Illustrated by Leonard Everett Fisher/Henry Holt and Company, New York.

Brochure, cloth, 10" x 8¼", (31) pp., illus., price \$2.95.

BLUM, HERMAN 1960-55

Blumhaven Digest/a review devoted to Historical Research and Opinions/Volume 4, No. 1/October, 1960/Testimonial Edition/for the/Anniversary/of/Abraham/Lincoln and/Centenary/of the/Civil War/Issued by/Blumhaven Library & Gallery/Edited and written by Herman Blum, Founder and Director/4651 Leiper Street./Philadelphia 24, Pa./[Cover title].

Pamphlet, paper, 6½" x 10", 67 pp., illus.

BROWN UNIVERSITY 1960-56

Books at Brown/Vol. XVIII, No. 4/October 1960/(drawing of John Hay Library)/Friends of the Library of Brown University/Providence, Rhode Island/[cover title].

Pamphlet, flexible boards, 6" x 9", 141-193 pp., Contains "Lincoln and Hay" by Henry B. Van Hoesen, pp. 141-180.

CATTON, BRUCE 1960-57

Mr. Lincoln's Army/by/Bruce Catton/[device]/Dolphin Books/Doubleday & Company, Inc./Garden City, New York.

Book, flexible boards, (paperback), 4¼" x 7", 394 pp., price \$1.45.

COLVER, ANNE 1960-58

Abraham Lincoln/For the People/A Discovery Book/By Anne Colver/illustrated by William Meyers/The Garrard Press/Champaign, Illinois.

Book, cloth, 6¼" x 9", 78 pp., illus., price \$2.25.