



Lincoln Lore

Bulletin of The Lincoln National Life Foundation . . . Dr. R. Gerald McMurtry, Editor
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Lincoln Newspaper Clippings

Editor's Note: The most exhaustive source of information about Abraham Lincoln in the Foundation's Library-Museum collection is the newspaper clipping files which utilize some fifty odd steel filing drawers. The clippings have been mounted and filed under approximately 3,000 different Lincoln subjects. It is reasonable to suppose that in a collection so voluminous, there would be a few clippings which would have considerable historical significance. Some of these are featured in this issue of *Lincoln Lore*.

R.G.M.

Newspaper Clippings Which Lincoln Read

President Abraham Lincoln's close association with the Rev. Phineas D. Gurley, D.D., the pastor of The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, is well known. The Lincoln family attended the regular services of Dr. Gurley's church, occupying pew number 14. Then, too, there is considerable evidence that Lincoln and Gurley often visited together, held conferences and discussed religious and other matters pertinent to the problems of the City of Washington, D.C. during the Civil War.

It was also the practice of the Lincoln family to send gifts to the pastor. On one occasion, Mrs. Lincoln sent poultry from Baltimore and a barrel of choice Northern apples to the Presbyterian manse.

Dr. Gurley was present at the bedside of the President following his assassination. Later, at the request of the Lincoln family, Dr. Gurley conducted the funeral services which were held in the East Room of the White House on April 19, 1865. His sermon was titled "Have Faith in God"—Mark 11:22. On June 1, 1865, a day appointed by President Andrew Johnson as one of "humiliation and prayer," Dr. Gurley preached a second Lincoln sermon, in the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, titled "The Voice of the Rod." Both of the above-mentioned sermons have been published.

Dr. Gurley's presence at the Petersen House on Tenth Street across from the Ford Theatre, was a comfort for Mrs. Lincoln and her son "through the hours of that interminable night," and weeks later the President's widow presented to the clergyman a hat worn by her husband (for the first and only time) at his Second Inaugural.

Sometime during the Fall of 1862, President Lincoln presented to Dr. Gurley some newspaper clippings relating to the military situation in general and the Battle of Antietam in particular, with some comments concerning the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation.

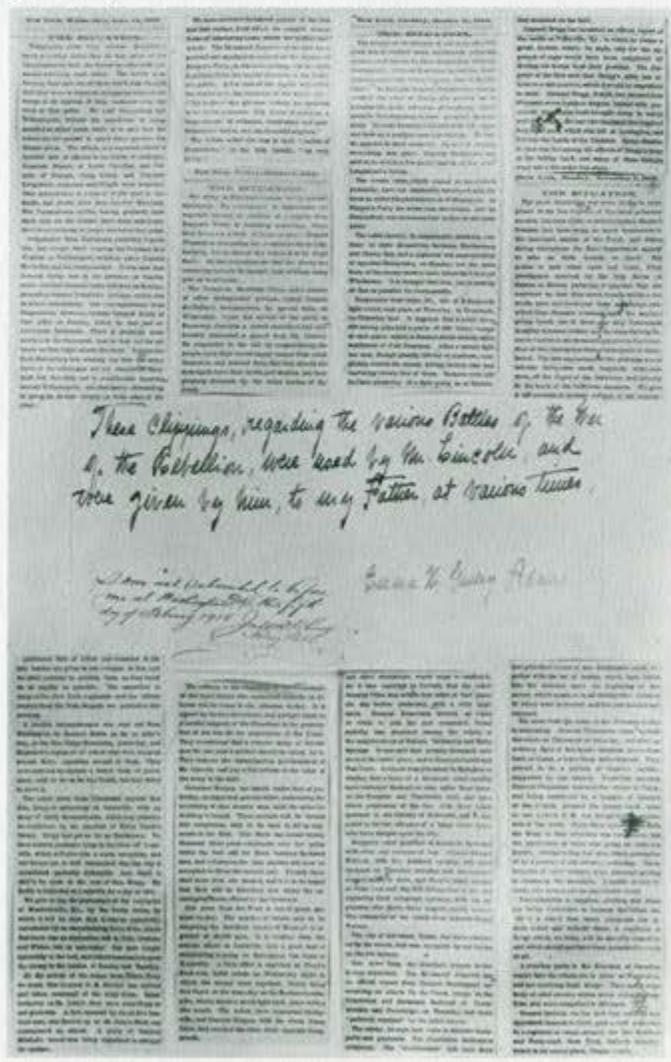
These clippings are pasted on both sides of a piece of cardboard measuring 11" x 17 1/4", with an affidavit bearing the date of February 5, 1914:

"These clippings, regarding the various Battles of the War of the Rebellion, were used by Mr. Lincoln, and were given by him, to my Father, at various times.

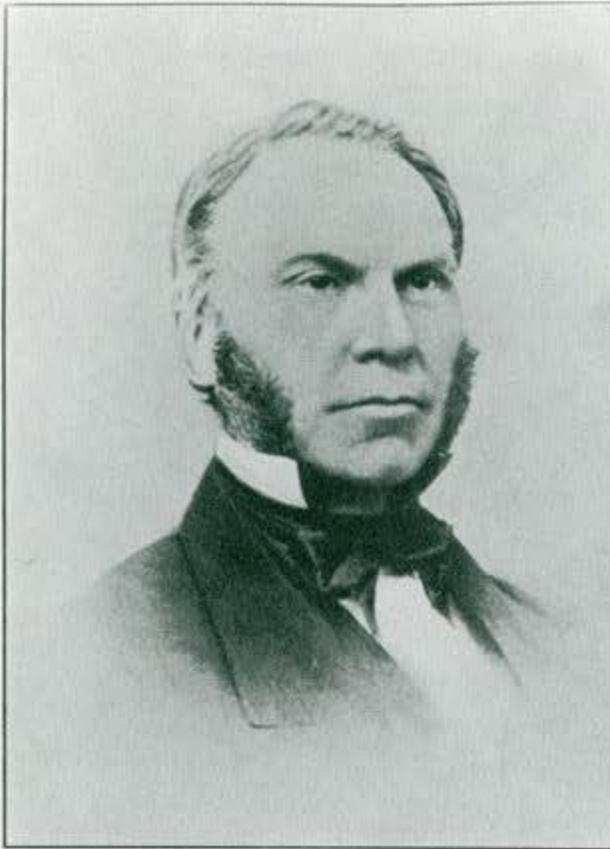
Emma H. Gurley Adams"

For many years the newspaper clippings which Lincoln read were kept in the files of the Lincoln Library-Museum of the Foundation. Within the last few weeks they have been placed on exhibit where they have attracted a considerable amount of attention on the part of our many visitors.

Additional information concerning Lincoln and Gurley can be found in *A History of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, One Hundred Fifty-Seven Years, 1803 to 1961* by Frank E. Edgington, 1962. Two of the chapters of this book are entitled "The Lincoln Family and the New York Avenue Church" and "The Lincoln Pew." This church should be included in the itinerary of every Lincoln student who visits the Nation's capital city. In addition to Lincoln's pew, one of the most outstanding exhibits in the church's Lincoln parlor is an original preliminary draft of the Emancipation Proclamation, a gift of Barney Balaban.



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation
Original newspaper clippings (Fall of 1862) used and read by President Lincoln and later presented to Dr. Phineas D. Gurley.



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation
 Rev. Phineas D. Gurley, D.D., pastor of The New York
 Avenue Presbyterian Church, 1854 - 1868.

The Grand Presidential Party February 5, 1862

In early February of 1862 Mrs. Abraham Lincoln (and the President) gave a White House ball, an innovation in the social customs of first ladies.¹ The February 5th affair was to be the first of three "receptions by invitation" to take the place of many costly formal dinners, and to provide more sociability than was possible at the large public levees.

One Washington newspaper reporter described the event, in the sub-title of his article, as "The Gayeties of the Republican Court — The Grand Party of the White House — Gathering of Dames, Demoiselles, Diplomats, Dignitaries of State, And Army and Naval Officers — Elegant Toilettes and Brilliant Uniforms and Decorations — Generous and Hearty Hospitality at the White House, &c., &c., &c."²

The Washington *Sunday Morning Chronicle* of February 9, 1862 carried a report of the reception under the byline of a reporter called "An Idler." The title of his news story is "Inklings of Idleness."

Perhaps the most intimate behind-the-scenes account of the reception is found in excerpts from letters written by John G. Nicolay, Lincoln's private secretary, to his fiancée, Therena Bates, who lived in Pittsfield, Illinois.³ The first excerpt is from a letter dated at Washington on February 2, 1862:

"Mrs. Lincoln has determined to make an innovation in the social customs of the White House, and accordingly has issued tickets for a party of five or six hundred guests on Wednesday evening next. For years dinners and receptions have been the only "Executive" social diversion or entertainments. But from what I can learn "La Reine" has determined to abrogate dinners and institute parties in their stead. How it will work remains yet to be seen. Half the city is jubilant at being invited, while the other half is furious at being left out in the cold."

The second excerpt is from Nicolay's letter dated at Washington on February 6, 1862 (the day following the reception):

"The grand party came off last night according to program, and was altogether a very respectable if not a brilliant success. Many of the invited guests did not come, so the rooms were not at all overcrowded. Of course the ladies were all beautifully dressed, having no doubt brought all their skill and resources to a culmination for this event. A lamentable spirit of flunkeyism pervades all the higher classes of society. . . . Those who were here therefore (some of them having sought and almost begged their invitations) will be forever happy in the recollection of the favor enjoyed, because their vanity has been tickled with the thought that they have attained something which others had not. I will not attempt the labor of a detailed description of the affair. The Jenkinses of the newspapers will do that more *in extenso* than I possibly could. Suffice it to say that the East room filled with well-dressed guests looked very beautiful, that the supper was magnificent, and that when all else was over, by way of an interesting *finale* the servants (a couple of them) much moved by wrath and wine, had a jolly little knock-down in the kitchen damaging in its effects to sundry heads and champaign bottles. This last item is *entre nous*.

"I enclose one of the invitation cards to show how they were got up."

In a letter dated at Washington on February 11, 1862 Nicolay wrote Miss Bates a third letter mentioning the grand party and the illness of the "President's little boys":

"I enclose you one or two newspaper slips describing the great party of last week. Since then one of the President's little boys has been so sick as to have absorbed pretty much all his attention, and the next — the youngest, is now threatened with a similar sickness."

The Lincoln Library-Museum of the Lincoln National Life Foundation has the two original "newspaper slips" which John sent to Therena.⁴ Because of the interesting details of the grand ball the clipping from the *Washington Morning Chronicle* of February 9, 1862 is reprinted.

Inklings of Idleness

The intimation that there was to be an evening party at the White House, followed by an issue of handsomely engraved cards of invitation from "The President and Mrs. Lincoln," naturally caused a decided sensation in metropolitan society. The Union residents, who have heard their secession neighbors croak over the decadence of "good society" here, since the Gwins, Thompsons, Browns, Cobbs, and others have gone to Dixie, were delighted to find that Mrs. Lincoln was about to eclipse all the entertainments where conspirators had met at hospitable boards, and to follow the example set by the ladies of Washington, Adams, and Tyler. Some who were not invited endeavored to denounce the affair as exclusive and un-democratic, but to no avail; neither were the predictions of a few sour old non-invited maidens, that it would prove a "failure," realized. The word "fail" is not in the Lincoln dictionary, and the arrangements were all successfully carried out. It was a decided, a perfect success, and the joys of realization certainly eclipsed the delights of anticipation.

The White House

The cards of invitation requested the presence of the guests at nine o'clock, and soon after that hour carriages began to drive up to the White House, and stop beneath the broad portico for those within them to alight. A force of the Metropolitan police, in their new uniform, kept the curious crowd from the doorway as the guests passed in, surrendering their cards to the ushers or guard. The guests were ushered up stairs, where spacious apartments were fitted up as dressing rooms, with guardians of outer garments, who gave checks, by which their owners could reclaim them. The ladies, as they emerged from their tiring-room in the full glory of evening costume, were taken in charge by their attendant cavaliers, and escorted down stairs, to pay respects to the host and hostess.

The East Room

The East room, universally regarded as one of the finest State apartments in Christendom, never appeared to more advantage than it did on Wednesday evening. Newly furnished, in exquisite taste, with a monster

carpet, equal in beauty to ancient tapestry, and with an elegantly painted ceiling, this noble hall was illuminated by three large chandeliers, and its large mirrors reflected the gay and varied crowds who filled it—jewels in a rich casket.

There was no formality. President Lincoln stood nearly in the centre of the room, receiving his guests with cordial greetings, and occasionally saying a pleasant word or two to those with whom he was well acquainted. Near him stood Mrs. Lincoln, in a becoming half-mourning garb, testifying her respect for the memory of the Prince-Consort, whose son had recently been her guest, and the representative of whose nation was to be present. It was a white satin dress, with a train, deeply flowered with black lace, which was looped up at intervals with knots of black and white ribbon. Her head-dress was a floral diadem of black and white flowers, with a dropping bunch of cape myrtle, and she wore a full set of pearls, with a beautiful boquet.

The Parlors

The three parlors, known from the prevalent color of the paper-hangings of each as the red, the blue, and the green rooms, were ornamented for the occasion with green wreathes and with exquisite bouquets of rare green-house plants.

Grouped in the blue parlor, during most of the evening, were the diplomatic corps, in the scrupulous evening dress of European gentlemen, which contrasted strangely with the frock-coats, thick boots, and ungloved hands of a few citizens of Hail Columbia. They also wore the ribbons and stars of the decorations of honor which have been bestowed on them, and it was noticed that, although their ladies were all dressed with marked elegance, especially those from the French legation, none equalled the daughter of Gen. Cass, now Madame Von Limburg, who wore a blue brocade, trimmed with rich lace.

In the red parlor, with Washington gazing down



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation
Therena Bates

A cracked ambrotype photograph from the Nicolay collection. In the files of the collection is to be found the following printed announcement: "Married in Pittsfield, Illinois, on Thursday, June 15, 1865, by Rev. Mr. Burnham, Mr. John G. Nicolay, late of Washington, D. C. to Miss Therena Bates of Pittsfield."

from canvass on them, were several young couples, who were evidently, oblivious of all that was transpiring around them. Their names, Mr. Editor, you will have sooner or later, grouped under the head of marriages.

The Guests

The President's Cabinet was, of course, present, and Secretary Seward was ubiquitous in his attentions to the ladies of the legations, as if determined to preserve *l'intente cordiale*. Mrs. Stanton was simply yet elegantly dressed in black silk, trimmed with white ribbon, edged with black; Miss Kate Chase looked bewitchingly in white silk, with a simple bunch of jessamine as her only ornaments; Mrs. Welles wore black velvet, with lace head-dress and collar. As for the Secretaries, every one knows how they look, and need I add that those who hold the portfolios of the War and of Marine Departments wore their beards—it's a way they have.

Vice President Hamlin, with his young and attractive lady, (who was becomingly attired in pink,) had over a two-third quorum of his Upper House, although not Bright. Senators Harris, Wilson, Hale, Simmons, Sherman, Chandler, Clarke, and Browning, were accompanied by their ladies, and the Senator from New Hampshire had also with him his fascinating daughter, whose toilette is always faultless. The Border States were further represented by Senators Garret Davis, Kennedy, Pearce, and others, while Justices Clifford, Wayne and Greer, with some of their officers, testified that the Supreme Court "still lives."

Mr. Speaker Grow had not as full a house, but there were goodly delegations, and Massachusetts, in particular, was well represented by Messdames Rice, Train, Gooch, and Thomas. Col. Lawrence, our consul-general at Florence, was present with Mrs. Lawrence, and ex-Mayor Berret, with his lady, was prominent in the crowd.

The military men were not numerous, as but few save generals commanding divisions were invited. Gen. McClellan wore his full uniform, and was accompanied by Mrs. McClellan (who wore a white satin dress, trimmed with flowers, where the flowers were looped up) and by her sister, Mrs. Marcy. General and Mrs. Marcy were also present. General McDowell and his accomplished lady were the objects of marked attention. Mrs. Buell and Miss Mason represented the gallant Kentucky commander, and Capt. Griffin, with his bride, was the admiration of the young ladies. General Fremont, in undress uniform, escorted Mrs. Fremont, who was plainly dressed in simple white, yet whose vivacious conversation sparkled more brilliantly than jewels.

General Heintzelman, the Porters, Hancock, Blenker, Hooper, Keyes, Stone, Doubleday, Casey, and Shields were there, and Young Duc de Chartres seemed well pleased with the "Republican Court," while Prince Salm Salm evidently desired a waltz, and Robert "Prince of Rails" Lincoln was gallantly attentive to the fair demoiselles.

N. P. Willis, with a dozen or so of those graceless scamps, "our own correspondents;" Cyrus McCormick, esq., the inventor; Clark Mills, the sculptor; Gardner, the photographic artist; Mrs. Don Piatt, once "Bell Smith abroad," but everywhere "at home;" Squier, the historian; and two or three governors of States, with a small sprinkling of politicians, a few upper clerks, and an ex-Congressman, constituted the chinking-in of the mass of humanity in sombre, undertaker-like broadcloth.

I had promised to say more about the ladies—or rather about their dresses—and to thus emulate the sneered-at "Jenkins," whose crinoline chronicles all read—but I can't do it. So my fair readers must imagine the East-room to have been a huge kaleidoscope, not filled with colored glass, but with a medley of bright jewels and bright eyes, (assorted colors) silks and satins, tulle and tarletane, velvet and swansdown, tiny slippers and delicate gloves, scented fans, red cheeks, (one lady had only rouged one side,) ears like curved sea-shells, uniforms and gold lace, stars and garters (of knighthood,) and other minor matters, as "citizens generally" close a procession. Imagine all this—then twirl your kaliedescope around and around

to martial music, and form an idea how the bright fragments fell into symmetrical patterns—then broke up, moved on, and so ever changed and varied the scene. No language can describe that shifting mosaic of beauty and gay colors, as uniforms and foreign stars—gems, laces, and illusion—like all the rainbows since the flood, were blended in confusion.

The Supper

There was no dancing, but a supper fit for the Epicureans of old. Such was the verdict of those present, who were admitted to view the tables, after they had been fully spread with the culinary triumphs and quaint confections of Maillard, of New York. The congressional dining-room was the scene of the banquet, and on the long table was the *plateau*, on the centre of which was a vase filled and wreathed with exotics. The flanking ornaments cunningly wrought in confectionery, represented the steam-frigate Union, a hermitage, a Roman helmet with flowing plume, a pagoda, cornicopaes, with cakes or ornamental forms, creams, jellies, ices, Charlotte russe, &c., &c., elegantly gotten up. Then there were pates, game, fowl, oysters, terrapin, and a variety of substantial cheer.

After all had feasted their eyes, the doors of the supper-room were closed, and then the President and Mrs. Lincoln, followed by the Cabinet and the diplomatic corps, entered, to commence the work of demolition, and the substantial testing, or rather, tasting, of the good cheer. Afterwards came the remainder of the guests:

"In the parlor, in the parlor,
Through the parlor onward,
Into the banquet-hall
Crushed seven hundred.
Good cheer to right of them,
Good cheer to left of them
Good cheer in front of them,
How the 'Verdants' wondered,
Stupid men trod on toes,
Tore nice young ladies' clothes,
Into the banquet hall
As if very hungry all
Crushed seven hundred.
'Give me vanilla ice!'
'Here I have called you twice.'
'Now champagne, and in a trice,'
'Waiter you've blundered.'
Flashing of spoons in air,
Eating of salad there —
Hungry men everywhere;
Scrambled and thundered;
Squeezed round by floating skirts:
Joked with by charming flirts:
Eating by rapid spirits:
There, in the banquet hall,
Lacking nothing at all,
Supped seven hundred."

After supper the promenades were resumed, the flirtations were continued, old friends and new acquaintances chatted, and the Yankee Guelphs fraternized cordially with the Border State Ghibelines, until it was time to say that closing word of this most successful and delightful party: "Good night!"

An Idler

Editor's Note: An entire chapter (VIII) of Dr. Kenneth A. Bernard's new book, *Lincoln and the Music of the Civil War*, The Caxton Printers, Ltd., Caldwell, Idaho, 1966, is devoted to the White House reception of February 5, 1862. The chapter is entitled "Will The Leader of The Band Please See Mrs. Lincoln?"

1. Miers, Earl Schenck, Editor-in-Chief, *Lincoln Day By Day—A Chronology 1809-1865*, Vol. III; 1861-1865, page 93, February 5, 1862.
2. *Washington Evening Star*, February 6, 1862.
3. John G. Nicolay married Therena Bates (1836-1885) June 15, 1865.
4. The Lincoln Library-Museum of the Lincoln National Life Foundation acquired in 1957 and 1958 many remnants of the Nicolay papers.

Did Walt Whitman Write Eulogy Of Lincoln for Speed in 1867?

Editor's Note: Since this issue of *Lincoln Lore* is devoted to newspaper clippings of one sort or another, it is appropriate to include a current article from *The Louisville Times*, dated February 10, 1967, that is of considerable interest. Written by Moyra Schroeder, *Louisville Times* staff writer, the article is reprinted with the permission of the newspaper editor.

"Was Walt Whitman a ghost writer for Kentuckian James Speed?"

"Did the famous American poet write a speech that Speed delivered 100 years ago in Louisville on Lincoln's birthday?"

"James Speed and his brother, Joshua, were close friends of Abraham Lincoln. James served in Lincoln's Cabinet as Attorney General of the United States.

"James Speed was also a friend of Walt Whitman, who was relatively unknown in the 1860s.

"Just this week, in researching a paper for a study club project, Louisvillian Mrs. Arthur Markham came across a letter, dated Dec. 29, 1866, from James Speed in Louisville to a Washington friend, (Assistant Attorney-General Ashton). Mrs. Markham found the letter quoted in 'Solitary Singer' by Gay Wilson Allen.

"The letter reads:

"I have been appointed to make an address upon the inauguration of a beautiful marble bust of Mr. Lincoln in this city (Louisville) — and am so crowded with business that I have no time to make such preparations as I should.

"Will you see our friend Walt Whitman and ask him whether he will take my rough draft of an address and revise and finish it for me — I have a certain notion that if he has the time and is in the mood, that he can do it better than any man I know. Please let me hear from you or Mr. Whitman soon as to this matter.

"Say to Mr. Whitman that if he can comply with my request, he will greatly oblige me."

"Speed made a speech, a little more than six weeks later, according to a story in an old Frankfort newspaper. ". . . in the Academy of Music in Louisville, to a select audience, densely crowded, a large proportion being ladies. . . . Governor Bramlette presided . . . unveiled the bust which elicited the approbation of the audience as a work of art. . . . The Governor then introduced ex-Attorney General Speed, who made one of the happiest efforts of his life.

"His eulogy was appropriate, impressive and, at times, sublime . . . the band played dirges at intervals. (Lincoln had been assassinated in April, 1865)."

"It is not known whether Speed's 'happiest efforts' were words written by Whitman, but maybe . . .

"According to subsequent reports, the marble bust was moved to the custom house building, was rediscovered in 1945, and moved to the J. B. Speed Art Museum, where it is now.

"The sculptor was Col. A. P. Henry, a native of Woodford County. He worked on the bust in a special room at the White House, set aside for the purpose."

The Lincoln Library-Museum has a fine copy of Speed's eulogy which appears as an eight page pamphlet with the following cover and title page: *Oration of James Speed Upon The Inauguration Of The Bust of Abraham Lincoln, At Louisville, Ky., February 12, 1867, Louisville: Bradley & Gilbert, Corner Third and Green Street. 1867.* This rare publication is listed in the *Monaghan Bibliography* as Number 894.

The Foundation staff has carefully read Speed's oration of 1867 (and compared it with an earlier and later pamphlet by the same author) with the hope that snatches of Walt Whitman's literary genius might be revealed. With the exception of a few purple passages, (some of which Speed used again in his 1887 address), nothing resembling Whitman's work is revealed. Reluctantly we have concluded that the former Attorney General wrote his own Lincoln speeches.

For further information concerning the Lincoln bust by Albert P. Henry, consult Robert L. Kincaid's article, "Forgotten Bust of Lincoln," *Lincoln Herald*, Vol. XLV, February 1943, No. 1, pages 16-19, 25.