



# Lincoln Lore

Bulletin of The Lincoln National Life Foundation . . . Dr. R. Gerald McMurtry, Editor  
Published each month by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Number 1563

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

May, 1968

## Robert T. Lincoln Letters

The first Lincoln item to be acquired by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company was a letter written by Robert T. Lincoln to Arthur F. Hall, dated August 3, 1905. In this letter Lincoln's eldest son gave the newly organized insurance company permission to use his father's portrait on its letterhead, and he also provided what he considered to be his father's best photograph. Likewise the letter implied that the insurance company could use the name "Lincoln" with his approval.

From the insurance company's point of view the Robert Lincoln letter and photograph became one of the firm's most valuable assets and it is easy to see how it would serve as a nucleus for the building of a great Lincoln library and museum such as the company has provided in its home office.

Today in the archives of the Lincoln Library-Museum are to be found some eighty-two letters and documents bearing Robert Lincoln's signature. Some of the early letters in longhand are very difficult to read, but from about 1899 up to his death in 1926 his letters were typewritten by a secretary, which saves the student many hours of hard work trying to decipher the contents. However, occasionally one of his letters in longhand will be discovered, written in his advanced age, which almost defies any effort one might make to read it.

Robert Lincoln's handwriting changed considerably during his lifetime; however, while he was a student at Phillips Exeter Academy and later at Harvard University, his script was quite legible (except for a name or word here and there).

The Foundation collection has a facsimile letter which Robert wrote to his mother on December 2, 1860. The stationery bears a letterhead of Phillips Exeter Academy although Robert left the academy before his father was elected President. However, he returned to Exeter for a visit of about a month after the 1860 election. The exuberant letter follows:



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation  
Portrait by the Bureau of Engraving  
and Printing

Dec. 2, 1860

Dear Mother —

You see I am back at Exeter and I feel very much at home.

I am here with Dick Keconkey (Cluskey?). We have been in a constant round of dissipation since we came. On Thursday we were at dinner at Miss Gale's On Friday Mr. Tuck gave a large party which passed off very finely. Mr. T. thinks of going to Chicago in about three weeks and thence to St.

Louis. So look out for him.

Tonight we are invited out to tea which will wind up our fun as we have to commence study again tomorrow.

We have only about six weeks more before going home.

I see by the papers that you have been to Chicago. Ain't you beginning to get a little tired of this constant uproar?

I have a couple of friends from St. Louis who are going to the inauguration after vacation is over and I have invited them to stop at our house on their (way). They are nice fellows and have been with me for the last year.

You will remember I wrote to Father about a fellow who is boaring me considerably. He capped the climax lately. There was a Republican levee and supper at Cambridge to which I was invited. I did not go for I anticipated what really happened.

I was sitting in my room about 9½ when two boys came up and handed me an admission ticket on the back of which this fellow had written, asking me to come over as they were calling for me. I wrote him a note excusing myself. He must be the biggest fool in the world not to know that I did not want to go over when if I did, I would be expected to make a speech! Just phancy my phelinks mounted on the rostrum, holding "a vast sea of human faces &"

I stop overwhelmed.  
Your affectionable  
R. T. Lincoln

Robert, unfortunately, in later years did not maintain the delightful sense of humor he had

exhibited in his student days. He lost his father and brothers, his mother was mentally ill, he was likely outmaneuvered in politics, his only son died, he was constantly hounded by the admirers of his father, he was never his own man but always the son of a famous father, and he suffered from nervous dyspepsia. However, those people in his intimate circle of friends found him to be convivial, generous, humorous and friendly. Perhaps his greatest attribute was his generous nature. The eighty-two letters and documents in the Foundation's collection, if read without bias and painstakingly (aside from those of a purely business nature) will reveal some of the above-mentioned attributes. Robert is rapidly re-

gaining his position as an important member of the Abraham Lincoln family, and his letters and documents bring higher and higher prices each year when offered for sale by autograph dealers and auction galleries. This list of items should also serve as a helpful check list:

LS (2 pages) Washington, D.C., July 14, 1881 to Gen. Wm. B. Franklin. Acknowledges receiving resolution of the Board of Managers, but requests official letter asking for appropriation. Franklin was president of the National Home For Disabled Volunteer Soldiers at Hartford, Conn.

LS (2 pages) Washington, D.C., July 20, 1881 to Gen. W. B. Franklin. Acknowledges receipt of accounts as Acting Treasurer of the House for fiscal year ending June 30, 1881.

LS (2 pages) Washington, D.C., August 3, 1882 to Gen. W. B. Franklin acknowledging estimates of the Board of Managers of the House for fiscal year ending June 30, 1884.

DS (printed) Washington, D.C., August 28, 1882 to J. W. Keifer regarding distribution of the volumes of the Official Records of the War of the Rebellion.

DS (2 pages printed) Washington, D.C., December 1, 1882. 2 page circular outlining plans for the publication of the Official Records of the War of the Rebellion.

LS (3 pages) Washington, D.C., January 24, 1883 to Gen. Wm. B. Franklin. Persons should address communications to the Home and not to the Secretary of War.

LS (2 pages) Washington, D.C., January 29, 1883 to W. J. Sewell, U.S. Senate, stating copy of the report of the Secretary of War for 1881 was sent, except volume 4 which will be sent as soon as received from the printer.

DS (printed) Washington, D.C., February 1, 1883. Appointment of Armed Isidore Lasseigne a cadet of the United States Military Academy.

ADS (2 pages) Washington, D.C., February 11, 1883 to Gen. H. T. Hendersen of Philadelphia declining invitation to Harvard Club dinner.

LS (2 pages) Washington, D.C., April 2, 1883 to Gen. Wm. B. Franklin acknowledging receipt of accounts which are forwarded to Second Auditor of the Treasury.

LS (2 pages) Washington, D.C., April 27, 1883 to Gen. Wm. B. Franklin. Acknowledges receipt of accounts of acting treasurer of home for the quarter ending March 31, 1883 has been received and referred to the Second Auditor of the Treasury.

LS (4 pages) Washington, D.C., June 21, 1883 to Gen. James H. Wilson of Boston, Mass., acknowledging receipt of letter inviting attention to the fact that the portion of navigable waters known as East River, from the foot of Blackwell's Island to First Street, New York City, is more or less dangerous to navigation.

DS Washington, D.C., January 30, 1884. Papers (not included) respectfully referred to the Commissioner of Pensions.

LS (3 pages) Washington, D.C., February 12, 1884 to T. E. Sickels of New York, N.Y., referring to letter proposing the construction of a bridge over the Arkansas River at Little Rock.

LS (2 pages) Washington, D.C., April 9, 1884 to Gen. Wm. B. Franklin acknowledging receipt of accounts which have been referred to Second Auditor of the Treasury.

LS (2 pages) Washington, D.C., April 10, 1884, to General Wm. B. Franklin acknowledging receipt of accounts for the home and inquiring why they were not signed.

LS (2 pages) Washington, D.C., April 16, 1884 to W. O. Stoddard of Morrisania, N.Y. acknowledging receipt of copy of *North American Review* containing article by the former secretary to President Abraham Lincoln. The Secretary of War requests copy of Stoddard's book.

LS (2 pages) Washington, D.C., May 10, 1884 to Col. G.

E. Gourand of Surrey, England, stating that Secretary of War recalls meeting at Mr. Pullman's at Long Branch and sends papers requested.

DS Washington, D.C., May 24, 1884, inscribed as follows: "Respectively referred to the Commissioner of Pensions."

LS (3 pages) (Typewritten) Washington, D.C., September 4, 1884 to Gen. Wm. B. Franklin stating opposition

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Robert Todd Lincoln (Aug. 1, 1843 - July 26, 1926), Secretary of War and minister to England. After attending Springfield, Ill. schools and Phillips Exeter Academy, he attended Harvard graduating in 1864. He spent four months in the Harvard Law School, but left when he was given an appointment on the staff of General Grant.

He was married on September 24, 1868 to Mary Harlan, the daughter of Senator James Harlan of Iowa. Of the three children of this marriage, two daughters survived him.

Leaving the Army he studied law in Chicago, Ill., and was admitted to the bar in 1867. He gained profitable clients among the railroad and corporate interests.

He was active in national politics in the 1870s and 1880s, serving as Secretary of War during the Garfield-Arthur administration, and as minister to London during the Harrison administration. He was declared to be the first American minister to England who did not become an Anglo-phile.

In 1897 when George M. Pullman died, Robert Todd Lincoln became the first acting executive and later president of the Pullman Company. In 1911 he resigned because of his health, but retained a connection as chairman of the board of directors.

In 1912 he moved to Washington, D.C. and acquired a summer home "Hildene" at Manchester, Vt. His father's papers, which Hay and Nicolay had used in the eighties, remained in his possession until near the end of his life when they were deposited in the Library of Congress to be sealed for twenty-one years after his death. The papers were opened to the public on July 26, 1947.

to use of Fort Leavenworth Military Reservation for the location of the new branch of the National Home for D.V.S.

LS (2 pages) Washington, D.C., November 11, 1884 to Gen. Wm. B. Franklin acknowledging receipt of accounts which were referred to Second Auditor of the Treasury.

LS (2 pages) Washington, D.C., December 2, 1884 to Gen. Wm. B. Franklin regarding deficiency estimates of the War Department which will be submitted to Congress by the Secretary of the Treasury.

LS (2 pages) Washington, D.C., December 20, 1884 to Gen. Wm. B. Franklin acknowledging receipt of accounts which were forwarded to the Second Auditor of the Treasury.

ALS Washington, D.C., April 11, 1885 to unknown correspondent declining request the nature of which is not revealed.

LS (Typewritten) Chicago, Ill., March 29, 1887 to Wm. M. Gardner of Vineland, N.J., stating that request for an "autograph of my father" is impossible to comply with due to lapse of time.

LS (Typewritten) Chicago, Ill., May 4, 1887 to Gen. R. D. Mussey of Washington, D.C. declining invitation to be present at re-union of the Society of the Army of the Cumberland when the statue of President Garfield will be unveiled.

LS (Typewritten), Chicago, Ill., March 13, 1888 to Darwin C. Pavey of Birmingham, Conn. stating that writer has no way of knowing who would care to purchase letter. Suggests placing in hands of New York dealer.

ALS (3 pages), Pelee Island, Ont., May 20, 1888 to John

Wanamaker of Philadelphia, Pa., declining an invitation to be present at a meeting to be held at the "memorable spot where our country was born."

ALS (2 pages), London, England, June 17, 1889 to "My Dear Colonel" stating that "my boy asks me to say that he is greatly obliged to you and wishes the . . . day was not on the 4th of July as we are to have a little domestic celebration he wants to be at home."

ALS (2 pages), London, England, September 21, 1889 to "My Dear Shaal" concerning matters of diplomatic business.

ALS London, England, June 3, 1890 to W. J. Davis expressing thanks for a gift to the legation of the United States of an encyclopaedia.

ALS (2 pages) London, England, June 9, 1890 to "My Dear Sir" expressing appreciation for *The Independent* in reference to the "great affliction which has come (to) my family."

ALS (2 pages) London, England, July 8, 1890 to J. Wm. Rickoff of London, England regarding the issuing of passports for travel in Germany and Alsace-Lorraine.

ALS (3 pages) London, England, October 14, 1890 to Mr. Tuckerman stating that the volume of Diplomatic Correspondence for the State Department should be directed to one accredited directly to Washington.

ALS (3 pages) London, England, December 22 (1890), to Prof. Flower regarding recent trip to Constantinople with observations about classical sculpture.

ALS (3 pages) London, England, June 10, 1891 to Mr. Sherman expressing some doubts about the legality of a mortgage involving Nebraska and Illinois law.

ALS (2 pages) London, England, July 15, 1892, to Mrs. Flower accepting dinner invitation.

ALS (3 pages) London, England, September 1, 1892 to Mr. Sherman regarding the visit of Jesse Spalding of Chicago in England.

ALS (4 pages) London, England, May 5, 1893 to "My Dear Palestine" expressing regret over leaving such good friends in London "now that the time has come to return to America."

ALS, Chicago, Ill., September 22, 1893 to "My Dear MacVeagh" inviting him and others to dine at The Chicago Club on Monday next at 7:30.

ALS (4 pages) Chicago, Ill., March 24, 1894, to Mr. Brown declining invitation to July 4th celebration and stating that "I suppose there can be no doubt that the Cooper Institute Address was a chief factor in his (Lincoln's) nomination . . ."

ALS (2 pages) Chicago, Ill., February 7, 1895 to G. Q. White declining invitation to Loyal Legion of Minnesota dinner to be given on anniversary of President Lincoln's birthday.

ALS (2 pages) Chicago, Ill., November 8, 1895 to Mr. Wakeman stating that "It gives me pleasure to enclose to you the only recent photograph of myself which was taken in London a little more than two years ago."

ALS (3 pages) Chicago, Ill., January 3, 1897 to R. W. Gilder stating that "As to the 'Lost Speech' matter, I must frankly say to you that I read the article with no other feeling than amusement at the length to which an 'enterprising' publisher would go . . . If Medill had been left alone, he would have made up, I am sure, a much better story . . ."

LS (Typewritten) Chicago, Ill., April 5, 1899 to Mr. Norman S. Bentley of New York, N.Y., providing special railway tickets from Jersey City to Chicago and Omaha to Oakland.

LS (Typewritten) Chicago, Ill., December 30, 1899 to John Wanamaker of Philadelphia, Pa., concerning a refusal to reconsider the re-employment of a discharged Pullman conductor.

LS (Typewritten) Chicago, Ill., October 3, 1900 to Dewitt

Miller of Philadelphia, Pa. indicating a willingness to examine a photograph of "my father's house" and to give you "my opinion as to whether any of the figures represent my father."

LS (Typewritten) Chicago, Ill., October 18, 1900 to Dewitt Miller of Philadelphia, Pa. stating that "Messrs. O'Brien & Son have shown me the photograph of my father's house, about which you wrote me recently. It is a good picture of the house, but I cannot recognize either of the figures shown in the photograph, but it is certain that neither of them is any member of my family."

ALS Cambridge, Mass., May 1901 to Prof. Washburn regarding number of seats in church to be reserved for Class Day.

LS New York, N.Y., May 4, 1901 to Dr. Chas. E. Rice of Alliance, Ohio, declining invitation to address the graduating class of Mt. Union College.

Telegram (Typewritten) Chicago, Ill., September 27, 1901 to Miss Helen Nicolay of Washington, D.C. expressing sympathy in regard to death of John G. Nicolay.

LS (Typewritten) Chicago, Ill., April 30, 1903 to W. W. Reed of Buffalo, N.Y. stating that the photograph in question is not "a pleasing likeness of my father."

LS (Typewritten) Chicago, Ill., November 25, 1904 to Wm. E. Curtis of Washington, D.C., acknowledging receipt of unknown details of the ancestry of my grandmother. "The blueprint copy of the Lincoln and Boone records in Pennsylvania, is very interesting to look at, and quite amusing in the close details of the births of children. It begins with the marriage of Abraham Lincoln, son of Mordecai Lincoln in 1737. It is my understanding that this Abraham Lincoln was the brother of my ancestor John Lincoln, who left Pennsylvania and settled in Rockingham County, Virginia about 1750. His son Abraham went to Kentucky in 1780, and my father was the grandson of the latter."

LS (Typewritten) Chicago, Ill., January 24, 1905 to Ayres Boal of Chicago, Ill., returning a list of Harvard Club members used in checking the Quinquennial Catalogue.

LS (Typewritten) Manchester, Vt., August 3, 1905 to Arthur F. Hall of Fort Wayne, Ind., stating that "I find no objection whatever to the use of a portrait of my father upon the letter-head of such a life insurance company named after him as you describe, and I take pleasure in enclosing you, for that purpose, what I regard as a very good photograph of him."

LS (Typewritten) Chicago, Ill., February 6, 1908 to E. C. Issenhuth of Redfield, S.D., expressing regret that no satisfactory portrait of the Sixteenth President is available for the commemorative exercises to be held in Redfield on Lincoln's birthday.

LS (2 pages typewritten) Chicago, Ill., March 5, 1908 to William O. Stoddard of Madison, N.J., expressing among other things unwillingness to take part in his father's centennial birthday anniversary.

LS (Typewritten) Chicago, Ill., November 6, 1908 to Helen Nicolay of Washington, D.C., inquiring as to the whereabouts of the original manuscript of the Gettysburg Address which John G. Nicolay used in his *Century* article in February 1894.

LS (2 pages typewritten) Chicago, Ill. November 12, 1908 to Helen Nicolay of Washington, D.C. expressing regret that the original manuscript of the Gettysburg Address cannot be located. "The papers that you sent Mr. Hay have been in my possession here now for a good while, and have been gone over, as it is thought, piece by piece, and I am assured that that particular document is certainly not among them. I do not need to assure you that if in the course of further examination it is found, it will be considered as belonging to you, but I have little hope of any such good fortune."

LS (Typewritten) Chicago, Ill., November 23, 1908 to Helen Nicolay of Washington, D.C. expressing regret that no leads to the missing manuscript (Gettysburg Address) are apparent for further search.

LS (Typewritten) Chicago, Ill., December 9, 1908 to Helen Nicolay of Washington, D.C. expressing delight that the missing Gettysburg Address manuscript has been found.

LS (Typewritten) Chicago, Ill., February 5, 1909 to Mrs. W. H. Siviter of Pittsburgh, Pa., declining to send to Smith College autograph manuscripts of Lincoln for exhibition purposes because "I do not want to scatter the papers any more than I have already done."

LS (Typewritten) Chicago, Ill., February 25, 1909 to E. C. Issenhuth of Pierre, S.D., expressing thanks for the February 13th issue of the *Pierre Daily Dakotan* (Lincoln Centennial issue) and the program of the Lincoln Banquet given under the auspices of Brotherhood St. Paul.

LS (2 pages typewritten) Chicago, Ill., April 22, 1909 to Daniel Fish of Minneapolis, Minn. sending him a reprint of Mr. Nicolay's *Century* article.

LS (2 pages typewritten) Augusta, Ga., March 10, 1910 to Edward Freiburger of New York, N.Y. with comments concerning his father's interest in the theatre in Washington, D.C. but expressing a lack of knowledge about any theatrical contacts his father might have had previous to the time he served as President.

LS (Typewritten) Chicago, Ill., December 27, 1910 to William O. Stoddard of Madison, N.J. expressing thanks for his Christmas greetings and in return sending his correspondent Christmas greetings and "a photograph of myself, taken several years ago, and probably the last that will ever be taken."

LS (Typewritten) Chicago, Ill., April 24, 1911 to S. M. Wright of San Diego, Cal. enclosing the gift of "a cancelled cheque written by my father under date of February 5, 1861, and bearing his signature". (This original check, torn in half but with signature, is in the collection of the Lincoln National Life Foundation.)

LS (Typewritten) Chicago, Ill., May 15, 1911 to R. U. Johnson of New York, N.Y. expressing thanks for Gen. Haupt's article which appeared in the *Century* (Sept. 1892).

ALS (3 pages) Washington, D.C., February 21, 1915 to Gen. Greene stating that "I entirely agree with you in thinking that a large increase of the Army & in a form to suit modern conditions is the most important thing before us."

LS (2 pages typewritten) Manchester, Vt., December 2, 1915 to Daniel Fish of Minneapolis, Minn. offering to try to help his correspondent obtain the three volume work *Letters and Diaries of John Hay*.

LS (3 pages typewritten) Manchester, Vt., May 22, 1916 to Daniel Fish of Minneapolis, Minn. reporting on efforts to secure for his correspondent the *John Hay Diary* and making an inquiry about the identity of Col. E. T. Lee of Minneapolis.

LS (2 pages typewritten) Washington, D.C., March 23, 1918 to Helen Nicolay of Washington, D.C. making inquiry about some of the files of the *Illinois State Journal* which John G. Nicolay borrowed and "I am writing, therefore, to ask whether it happens that your father's papers are in such shape that you could without undue trouble say anything about the *Illinois State Journal*. The papers which came to me finally occupied seven steamer trunks and in examining them with some care, I think it quite certain those newspaper files are not among the papers."

LS (Typewritten) Washington, D.C., March 27, 1918 to Helen Nicolay of Washington, D.C. indicating that while the files of the *Illinois State Journal* have not been found that it will not be "any great public misfortune."

LS (Typewritten) Washington, D.C., April 8, 1918 to S. Townsend of Plainfield, N.J. with a criticism of a "photograph which seems to be based on some attempted likeness of President Lincoln. If taken as it seems to have been, from a death mask, it has all the disagreeable qualities of such a work, and I can only say it is the

worst thing of the sort I have ever seen in the way of a likeness."

LS (3 pages typewritten) Manchester, Vt., August 3, 1918 to Cordelia Jackson expressing thanks for a copy of the *Chronicles of Georgetown* and indicating a great interest in the history of that area. Miss Jackson mentioned some buttons and Robert Lincoln made the following comment: "I must say to you that the buttons referred to do not interest me at all. No doubt Dr. Gurley received them from my father as stated, but I very much doubt that my father received them from General Grant. Knowing the relation between General Grant and my father very well, I cannot believe that there were any circumstances under which General Grant would have presented to my father a batch of cadet buttons."

LS (2 pages typewritten) Chicago, Ill., October 15, 1919 to Daniel Fish of Minneapolis, Minn. discussing early processes of making photographs and enclosing copies of Lincoln's photographs with the hope that the correspondent will compare them with his for differences in detail.

ALS (2 pages) Manchester, Vt., October 30, 1919 to Daniel Fish of Minneapolis, Minn. with additional comments on his father's photographs and the different processes of manufacture.

LS (Typewritten) Washington, D.C., December 30, 1920 to Wm. O. Stoddard of Madison, N.J. expressing thanks for correspondent's "Holiday good wishes."

LS (3 pages typewritten) Washington, D.C., February 23, 1922 to Mrs. Loveland Munson of Boston, Mass. regarding the problems of maintaining a memorial library for Judge Munson, with limited funds and little interest on the part of some of the officers. Robert's correspondent had visited Springfield, Illinois and his comment was "I am glad you made your little visit to Springfield, where I have not now been for a number of years. It used to be a very interesting old town, but I am not sure that I now know a single man there, and only two or three old girl friends in addition to my young cousin, who has charge of the house. It is no longer a cheerful place for me to visit."

LS (Typewritten) Washington, D.C., February 7, 1925 to Harry V. Baker of Greenville, Ohio, in regard to Col. Elmer E. Ellsworth with the statement "that the story which you sent me, as contained in an issue of 'The Rotarian' is absolutely unfounded in fact."

LS (Typewritten) Washington, D.C., May 7, 1925 to Mrs. B. C. Hendry of Chicago, Illinois complying with a request of her daughter that he write a note to Mrs. Hendry for inclusion in her scrapbook.

ALS, Washington, D.C. December 29, 1925 to Mr. Butler stating that "I am still so much out of sorts that I must refrain from accepting your most kind invitation for New Year's Day."

## NOTICE

Subscribers who still wish to obtain copies of the LINCOLN LORE INDEX may do so by sending a check in the amount of \$2.00 to the Lincoln National Life Foundation, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801.

The index is a 56 page publication which matches in size and color of ink the monthly bulletin. It covers the first 1500 issues, dating from April 15, 1929 to February, 1963. Bulletins dating from March 1963 through December 1967 are indexed in Lincoln Lore Number 1558 and 1559.