



BOOKS AT BROWN

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McLELLAN LINCOLN COLLECTION

SINCE the McLellan Lincoln Collection came to Brown in 1923 (the gift of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., class of 1897) it has been increased each year by the purchase of both current and older works on Lincoln and one or two selected manuscripts, and by adding photostat copies of manuscripts or rare items that are in other collections. In this way the Collection has grown from 6,000 to over 22,000 items (9,000 books, 3,800 broadsides and leaflets, 3,600 pictorial works, and 1,700 manuscripts).

During the past year, there have been added to the Library a microfilm copy of the Robert Todd Lincoln papers and The Journal and Scrapbook of Major John C. Henshaw. These two collections considerably enrich the resources of the Library, both for the study of Lincoln and the study of the Civil War.

Since general articles about the Robert Todd Lincoln collection and the dramatic ceremonies attending its opening at the Library of Congress have appeared in print we will give only a few statistics regarding the size of the collection. It contains 18,350 separate documents, consisting of 41,751 leaves, bound in 194 volumes and indexed by 38,403 entries. The film copy which we have acquired consists of 99 rolls containing 10,300 feet of 35 mm. film.

The documents are largely of a political character, nearly 1,000 are by Lincoln himself, 1,100 from members of his cabinet, 1,200 covering relations with his generals, a scattered number of family letters, threatening letters, and the usual number from job-seekers.

A few high spots are Lincoln's revisions of Seward's recommendations

for his First Inaugural Address (March 4, 1861); Message to Congress in Special Session (July 4, 1861); and the Emancipation Proclamation as first sketched and shown to his Cabinet, July 22, 1862.

This collection is an important source of information for the student of Lincoln and the Civil War. For further information the reader is referred to Mearns, D. C., The "Lincoln Papers.," *Abraham Lincoln quarterly* 4:369-85, 1947.

The second acquisition is a large scrapbook kept by Providence-born Major John C. Henshaw, which was acquired from a California dealer in rare books and manuscripts. It contains letters and military commissions to Henshaw from Lincoln, journals of his military experiences, an autobiographical sketch, correspondence, and printed material relating to his court-martial.

While details of Major Henshaw's life are virtually unknown, he served with distinction in the Seminole and Mexican wars and was later court-martialed and dismissed from the Army. On his twenty-seventh birthday Henshaw wrote an autobiographical sketch, partly to relieve the tedium of dull days in camp. He was born in Providence on May 25, 1815. Two years later his family moved to Canada. The boy's school days were spent happily enough in Montreal, but when sixteen, he ran away from home and came to the States to seek his fortune. After several unfortunate business ventures, and shocked by his father's death, he became thoroughly disillusioned. His proud and haughty nature may have been in part responsible for an experience which was to happen to him in later life. He wrote, "Disappointed in my too sanguine and visionary youthful expectations, overwhelmed with affliction at the death of a parent I dearly loved, . . . a stranger among my own kindred, treated with rudeness and slandered with malignancy I shrunk [sic] within myself. I called no man friend, I became a misanthrope determining ever after to trust no man . . ."

Henshaw applied for a post in the U. S. Army, and in July, 1839, was granted a commission as Second Lieutenant in the U. S. Infantry. He saw dangerous service in the Seminole War in Florida, about which his autobiography records that "the Florida Indians are the most cruel and blood-thirsty of any tribe on this continent. Not an instance has been known of their sparing a single captive . . ."

In the Mexican War he was actively engaged during the whole bombardment of Vera Cruz prior to its surrender, and was named by the commanding general to demand and receive the surrender of the Mexican Army. He was breveted by the President for "gallant and meritorious conduct."

The peace which followed proved a more difficult time for John Henshaw than did the war. Evidently his pride and impatience with authority were his undoing. In 1855 he was court-martialed and dismissed from the army for disobedience, neglect of duty, insubordinate conduct, and disrespect towards his commanding officers. He bitterly resented what he felt was an unjust sentence. The ensuing years he spent in tireless protest of his sentence and by appealing to all who might be in a position to help him to be reinstated. The scrapbook contains copies of numerous letters and petitions addressed to President Buchanan by influential persons in the government requesting that the sentence of the court be removed, and that Henshaw be reinstated into the army as Paymaster. President Buchanan agreed to give the subject "his earliest and most favorable consideration." But the position was filled by a Southerner, since the President was looking to the South for renomination. Henshaw abandoned hope and decided to "await the inauguration of a new administration."

Our knowledge of the details concerning Henshaw's request for pardon were incomplete until we obtained the microfilm copy of the Robert Todd Lincoln papers. In these papers we found that Major Henshaw wrote Lincoln as follows:

No 90 Beaver Street
New York Febr'y 2/60

Hon

Abraham Lincoln

My Dear Sir

I have forwarded to your address by the hands of Mr. Blinn of the McLean County Bank, Bloomington, Ill. a Copy of a work entitled "Kellogg on Labor & other Capital." This work is the Composition of my father in Law the late Edward Kellogg of this city. He spent several thousand Dollars in getting up this work for no other purpose than to communicate his views to his fellow Citizens in the hope of benefitting them, and not with a view to pecuniary recompense, as he has never sought to sell the work. My previous historical knowledge of you, a personal respect increased by the brief acquaintance formed with you while in Clinton last fall has prompted me to forward this Book as a slight mark of the personal & political esteem which I entertain for you. It is not for me to speak of the merits of the Book, it must stand or fall by its truth, & it is believed by many that the principles therein enunciated must in the lapse of time prevail. Accept the humble gift my dear Sir & believe me that I am one who will always exert what influence I may possess to elevate Abraham Lincoln to the highest post in the gift of the people.

Very truly Yours

John C. Henshaw.

Lincoln's acknowledgment of this letter and the gift of Kellogg, *On Labor and Other Capital*, is preserved in the scrapbook and is reproduced below:

Springfield Ill. Feb 13. 1860

Major John C. Henshaw.

My dear Sir:

Your letter of the 2nd Inst^{ce} notify-
ing me that you had forwarded to me by the hand
of Mr. Blinn, a certain book on ~~water power~~ *Salvo*
& *Capital*, was duly received — I have not yet
received the book, but I presume it shall, so soon
as I shall visit Bloomington — I am much gratified
by the mark of your kind remembrance. I expect to
be in New York about the 27th Inst^{ce} when & where
I shall be very happy to meet you.

Yours very truly
A. Lincoln.

Again to follow the thread of the Henshaw-Lincoln relations, we turn to the Robert Todd Lincoln papers, where we find the following letter:

Brooklyn May 19/60

Hon A. Lincoln.

My Dear Sir.

I sincerely regret that my absence at the South prevented our meeting upon your late visit to New York. On my return home I found your letter informing me of your Contemplated visit to the East, the favorable impression of my friends & acquaintances, the prepossession of my own family & relatives together with the personal regard which I entertain, would have made it peculiarly gratifying if I

had had the opportunity of offering you some little attention & hospitality. I learn however that your stay was brief, & your residence while in New York not generally known. The news of your nomination reached us yesterday afternoon and I am prompted to offer you my warmest congratulations, as you have long been the object of my hopes, for I have an abiding faith in your success. The nomination is received here with general satisfaction.

The opposition to Mr. Seward among many Republicans is strong, his political connection with Thurlow Weed is one of the prominent reasons for it, within half an hour after the receipt of the News I met three persons among my acquaintances who would not have voted for him & will vote for you. & I suppose there are probably thousands of others in the region who will do the same thing.

Although unconnected with & never before an active participant in Politics I shall labor *con amore* in this Case. As I had previously spoken of you everywhere among my friends in connection with the Presidency after my return from the West, I find myself now interrogated for information as to what I think of the nomination.

Yours very truly

John C. Henshaw.

From this letter we learn that Lincoln and Henshaw did not meet as Lincoln had proposed, while Lincoln was in New York for his Cooper Union Speech.

It was not until a letter of October 18, 1860, that Major Henshaw indicated in writing that he was not a disinterested backer of Lincoln but had an axe to grind. This letter copied from the Robert Todd Lincoln papers runs as follows:

No 90 Beaver Street
New York Oct 18/60

Hon

Abraham Lincoln,

My Dear Sir

I have taken the liberty of forwarding to your address a pamphlet in which I am deeply concerned, in the hope that at some leisure moment you may feel disposed to peruse it, and understand how a Southern democratic functionary has exercised his power to the injury of a man who has spent the best energies of his life in the service of his Country, whose services embrace and are consecrated by no less than eight hard fought Conflicts.

This communication may seem premature, but I have faith in an overruling & just providence, & in its design to elevate to power, a man capable of dispersing & purifying the miasma that pollutes the moral & political atmosphere of our Country.

Very truly Yours,

John C. Henshaw.

The pamphlet mentioned in this letter, entitled: *Proceedings of A General Court Martial...for the Trial of Brevet Major John C. Henshaw*, New York, Hart, 1858, is preserved in the scrapbook and bears on its inside back wrapper in Lincoln's hand the note reproduced below:

Executive Mansion

March 16. 1861

I have examined, to some extent, the case of Major Henshaw, and have been brought to deeply sympathize with him. He wishes to be appointed a Reg. Master; and if, in the opinion of Gen. Scott, this can be done without impropriety, it would gratify me to do so.

Yours Obedt Servt
A. Lincoln.

However, before Lincoln had had time to make the above suggestion, Henshaw had decided to press his case in person. He went to Springfield and saw Lincoln on December 26, 1860, for we find a letter, preserved in the Robert Todd Lincoln papers, date-lined Springfield, December 27, 1860, in which Henshaw summarized his case and urged the President to study it "before you are pressed by more important business, so that the judgment formed by you at this time may have its due weight when the period for your final action presents itself."

That nothing came from Lincoln's request to General Scott is apparent from the following note copied, (the location of the original is unknown to us) November 21, 1861, which Lincoln gave to Major Henshaw, to deliver to the Adjutant General:

"For near [sic] a year, I have known of Major Henshaws Case and have thought that to exclude him from the service permanently and forever would be overharsh. I therefore wish him to be appointed to the first vacancy of a Paymastership in the Regular Army that he can be consistently with my former recommendations."

Signed A. Lincoln

In spite of Lincoln's intercession on behalf of Henshaw, the Adjutant General was still determined to defeat the President's order if possible. It was then that all the members of the New York, Massachusetts, and Connecticut [why not Rhode Island also?] Congressional Delegations on December 23, 1861, joined in a written request to Lincoln for Henshaw's appointment, expressing the hope that it would not be delayed. The President informed them that he would give Henshaw the first vacancy that occurred, but that it was beyond his power to create a vacancy. Lincoln then issued the following order:

"I shall not be satisfied with any officer's attempt to throw obstacles in the way of Major Henshaw's appointment as I have directed it."

Signed A. Lincoln

(Undated copy, probably January 18, 1862. Again the location of the original note is unknown to us.)

In spite of Lincoln's orders and the support of the New England Congressmen, Major Henshaw was unsuccessful in his quest for re-appointment to the Army, for (from a letter in the Robert Todd Lincoln papers) on July 26, 1862, we find Major Henshaw addressing to Lincoln "the last communication I shall probably ever have occasion to address you . . ." and complaining that Lincoln had not recognized his claim for office.

This last letter, however, seems to have had the desired effect for, now, turning to the Henshaw scrapbook, we find a commission, dated August 7, 1862, and signed by Lincoln, appointing Henshaw Assistant Adjutant General with the rank of Captain. The last document in the scrapbook which directly concerns Lincoln and Henshaw is the latter's commission of February 29, 1864, as Judge Advocate General with the rank of Major.

In addition to the few items described here, the scrapbook contains other documents relating to the Civil War, and also Henshaw's journals of his experiences during the siege of Vicksburg. We hope that this journal will be examined in more detail later and possibly be made the subject of a short paper, or Master's thesis.

Stuart C. Sherman, Editor
BOOKS AT BROWN

With the assistance of the
Staff of the Special Collections Room.

DESIDERATA

Miller, Edmund Morris. Australian literature from its beginnings to 1935. Melbourne, Melbourne University press, 1940. 2v. This title was printed in a small edition and has been out of print since very shortly after publication. Can any Friend help us locate a copy?

Paré, Ambroise. Oeuvres complètes d'Ambroise Paré revues et collationnées sur toutes les éditions, avec les variantes . . . accompagnées de notes historiques et critiques . . . et sur la Vie et les Ouvrages d'Ambroise Paré par J. F. Malgaigne. Paris, 1840-41. 3v. \$42.00

Zinner, Ernst. Verzeichnis der astronomischen Handschriften des deutschen Kulturgebietes. München, Beck, 1925. \$20.00

Gilchrist, A. Life of William Blake, with selections from his Poems and other writings. Oxford, 1880. 2v. \$27.30

Payne, John Howard. Charles the Second; or, The merry monarch. A comedy in three acts. London, Longman, Hurst, etc., 1824.

The following Walt Whitman items are not in the Harris Collection and, needless to say, we would be delighted to have some Friend add these to the Saunders Whitman Collection:

Whitman, Walt. Memoranda during the war. Camden, 1876. One of Whitman's rarest books.

Whitman, Walt. Leaves of grass. Philadelphia, 1891-92. The famous "death-bed" edition. An imperfect copy was recently sold at auction for \$85.00.

Whitman, Walt. Fulles d'herba. Traduccis de Cebria Montolia. Barcelona, 1909. \$18.93

How many Brown graduates know that Abraham Lincoln and Mary Todd were married by Charles Dresser, graduate of the Class of 1823?

Books at Brown, v. 9, no. 4, was not published. In its place the Friends published and distributed *Colonial Poets 1609-1760*, Providence, 1947; a catalogue of an exhibition of books from the Harris Collection.

Address mail and make checks payable to

BROWN UNIVERSITY, *Friends of the Library, John Hay Library, Providence, R. I.*