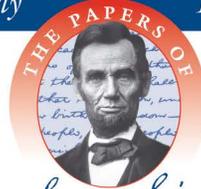


LINCOLN EDITOR

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Abraham Lincoln

"a great honor and a great labor" A. Lincoln, October 26, 1863

PROJECT TO SURVIVE BUT STAFFING REMAINS A QUESTION

The Papers of Abraham Lincoln will survive. That's the good news. James P. Bruner, the chair of the Board of Trustees for the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency; Garth Madison, the acting director of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency; and Nadine O'Leary, the acting director of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum have each expressed their support for the project and commitment to keeping it moving forward. The National Historical Publications and Records Commission, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and Iron Mountain remain committed supporters of the Papers of Abraham Lincoln.

Nevertheless, the persistent budget impasse in the State of Illinois continues to raise serious questions about staffing the project into state fiscal year 2017, which begins July 1, 2016. To maintain the current level of staffing, the project needs \$235,000 from the State of Illinois beyond the director's salary and needs to raise

\$180,000 in private funding. Without any state funding, the private goal rises to \$415,000, a target that would likely mean laying off additional staff in the summer of 2016. Following the loss of four colleagues in November 2015, the loss of more editors would make publication of the first segment of Series II online in 2017 impossible.

Also in danger would be the continuation of the search at the National Archives. In the past nine and one half years, researchers have located and scanned more than 66,000 documents at the National Archives, the vast untapped storehouse of Lincoln documents. Suspending that search, even for a time, before it is complete threatens the remarkable progress the Papers of Abraham Lincoln has made there. The loss of staff experience and removal of scanning equipment from space provided by the National Archives could not be remedied easily if at all.

PROJECT AND STAFF NEWS

On November 1, Assistant Director/Associate Editor Stacy McDermott gave a presentation on Mary Lincoln and signed copies of her book, *Mary Lincoln: Southern Girl, Northern Woman*, at the Museum of the Grand Prairie in Mahomet, Illinois. The presentation was part of the museum's annual fall lecture series.

On November 17, Assistant Editor Christian McWhirter gave a presentation on "The Music of Lincoln's Time" to the Sangamon County Historical Society in Springfield.

In November, Director Daniel W. Stowell's chapter, "Abraham Lincoln: Lawyer, Leader, President," was published in *Lincoln, the Law, and Presidential Leadership*, edited by Charles M. Hubbard and published by Southern Illinois University Press.

The project continues to add documents from private collections and repositories to its database,

which now includes records for more than 103,500 texts. The project appreciates the assistance of William A. Cole, who shared images of his letter by Massachusetts Governor John A. Andrew to Abraham Lincoln from May 18, 1861, introducing Nicholson Broughton, an agent of the American Tract Society, who wished to distribute religious tracts among the troops. Lincoln endorsed the letter, "I approve M^r Broughton's object as indicated by the within letter of Gov. Andrews." This document offers an excellent example of how The Papers of Abraham Lincoln builds upon *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (1953). Although the *Collected Works* included Lincoln's endorsement, its editors relied on a printed source, which did not include the letter by Governor Andrew, Lincoln's misspelling of the Governor's name, or Broughton's brief 1891 explanation of the letter's context, all of which appear on the original document.

In December, the project received images of two documents from the British Library in London, England. One is a letter written by Abraham Lincoln in March 1843 to Richard S. Thomas of Virginia, Illinois, expressing his interest in being a candidate for Congress. The other is a thank-you note penned by John Hay and signed by Lincoln from January 1865, thanking Joseph C. Grubb for a portrait of John Bright, the British radical statesman who strongly supported the Lincoln administration in Parliament.

Also in December, the project received images of two documents from University Archives in Westport, Connecticut. One was a previously unknown 1834 survey that Lincoln prepared for William G. Cantrall, during his tenure as deputy surveyor from 1834 to 1836. The second is a letter by Lincoln to Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton from May 1863, regarding the federal land grant to the State of Illinois for the construction of the Illinois Central Railroad.

THANK YOU “DOCUMENT TIPSTERS”

One of the key factors that makes The Papers of Abraham Lincoln a successful and expanding project is the contributions of people outside of our staff and volunteers. Most often, these are generous folks who let us scan their Lincoln documents or make financial donations to the project, but another class is what we’ll call the “document tipsters.” These tipsters are people who find Lincoln documents in repositories or up for auction and give us a head’s up so we can track them down. In 2015, Jonathan White was a tipster extraordinaire, and we would like to thank him publicly.

Jon is a fine Lincoln scholar, having already written three books on Lincoln and the Civil War Era: *Abraham Lincoln and Treason in the Civil War: The Trials of John Merryman* in 2011, *Emancipation, The Union Army, and the Reelection of Abraham Lincoln in 2014*, and *Lincoln on Law, Leadership, and Life* last year. He’s now working on two other projects, which are requiring him to hunt down Lincoln documents. Fortunately for us, several of these documents are new to us, and we are delighted to add them to our database.

Indeed, Jon is now responsible for eight new discoveries: two by Lincoln, five written to him, and one substantial endorsement. One of the letters is of an extremely rare type: a survey Lincoln conducted for a private individual. There are a few surveys out there that the future president conducted for local governments, but private ones are largely lost, so we are especially eager to add this one to our collection. The other original Lincoln document is a note from the presidential years to Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton requesting him to meet with captured Confederate general Rufus Barringer. Both documents were up for auction, and these are often the hardest for us to track down.

So, thanks again to Dr. White. Anytime we get a lead on a document—even if it’s already in our database—we are very grateful. If you know of any documents out there in the wild that might have escaped our notice, please don’t hesitate to let us know.

*By Christian McWhirter
Assistant Editor*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The project appreciates the generosity of the following donors (October - December 2015): Charles Bauer, James S. Frost, Wendell W. Hahn, Marilyn Kok, Lou Lorscheider, Woodford McClellan, Meredith Corporation, Honorable Richard H. Mills, Beverly Wilson Palmer, Francie Staggs, Suzette L. Starr, Robert Stevens, Rhoda B. Sneller, and Grant Veeder.

A DOCUMENT WITH A VIEW

One of the things I enjoy about being a transcriber at the Papers of Abraham Lincoln is the excitement I feel when I open a new document. I’m filled with anticipation. Will it be from someone famous? Someone I know from my own reading? A foreign dignitary? A wife, or a mother? Someone from Illinois, or even from Springfield?

A few months ago, I opened an intriguing letter from Rev. Henry Thompson, Baronet, who was the Rector at Tunbridge Wells in August, 1861.¹ I am a

big fan of movies, and one of my favorites is *A Room with a View* (1985), based on the 1908 novel by E. M. Forster. The portions of the story, which take place in England, are set in Tunbridge Wells, Kent, about 30 miles southeast of London, and Mr. Beebe, the Rector, is an important character. When I read the dateline, I stopped to send a quick text to my son (another fan of the movie): “I just opened a letter from the Rector of Tunbridge Wells, but alas, it’s NOT from Mr. Beebe.”

Rev. Henry Thompson (1796 – 1868) was a graduate of Oriel College, Oxford, in 1821 with a Master of Arts. He succeeded to the baronetcy in 1826 on the death of his elder brother, Norborne. He married twice. His first wife was Hannah Jean Grey, who was a niece of Charles, the 2nd Earl Grey, for whom the popular tea is named. They married in 1826, and had one daughter. Hannah Thompson died in 1829, shortly after her daughter's birth. In 1835, Rev. Thompson married Emily Frances Anne Leeke. They had two sons and two daughters. He served at the Frant Rectory in Tunbridge Wells from 1844 until his death in 1868. Unfortunately, neither of his sons survived him, so the baronetcy was declared extinct.²



St. Alban's Church in Frant

Rev. Thompson described himself as “the Rector of a Country parish in Old England.” He wrote to President Lincoln on August 31, 1861, explaining that his interest in the situation in America was tied to the fact that many of his parishioners had emigrated to “your fine country.” Many had sent “cheerful letters . . . filled with glowing accounts of their prosperous and happy circumstances.” But now, he was afraid that they were being caught up in “the fratricidal war which threatens to soak your soil in blood,” and he asked, “for what?”

Rev. Thompson wasn't the only one asking, “for what?” The eyes of Europe were turned toward America and her conflict. According to historian Don H. Doyle, “Foreign politicians, journalists, reformers, and intellectuals joined a lively debate on what they called the American question and what it meant to them... The American war, many observers came to believe, would decide the destiny of democracy and free labor for generations to come.”³

Rev. Thompson then proceeded to predict the possible outcomes of the conflict. He began with a rather simple statement: “Either the Confederates will succeed, or the Federalists.” (I think I even mumbled, “Well, thank you, Captain Obvious!”). Drawing on his own understanding of history and human nature, and with surprising insight, he fleshed out two likely scenarios.

“If the Confederates are victorious,” Rev. Thompson wrote, “your great nation will be divided into two weak Republics, each jealous of the other,

each impregnated with seeds of dissatisfaction and dissolution, which will not improbably, cause both the Northern and the Southern Confederacy eventually to break up into as many independent governments as there are now states in the union.” This prediction indeed began to manifest itself during the war, at least within the Confederacy. In his television series, *The Civil War*, Ken

Burns notes that the Southern states chafed under Jefferson Davis's efforts to create a centralized government. Some states were even talking about “seceding from the secession.”⁴

Rev. Thompson then turned his attention to the North. “If the Federalists should conquer,” he wrote, “it will only be after an extensive and bloody war, which must load your finances with a

large debt, and engender in the vanquished party feelings of bitter hatred towards their victors...Such feelings can only be kept down by force, by the maintenance of numerous & well appointed garrisons throughout the Southern states, in fact by a Standing Army.” He predicted that the leader of this nation would be forced, in trying to govern such a nation, to follow the example of Oliver Cromwell or Napoleon. “He will dismiss your troublesome, helpless Congress, and establish a military despotism.”

Next, Rev. Thompson focused on Lincoln himself, and his leadership. “The men of the United States have recently elected you to preside over their destinies at this critical period, as the wisest man in the Country. Every word you have written, and every act ascribed to you in the newspapers satisfy us in England, that the choice of the nation could not have fallen on a better man.”

Rev. Thompson then came to the crux of his letter. “But surely, Sir, you must have discovered that Democratic Institutions are not equal to meet such a crisis as the present. Nothing short of a monarchy will suffice. Be candid enough to make this admission. Be bold enough to declare it.” Rev. Thompson's solution: “Invite over one of our English princes to found a Constitutional Monarchy in America.... Then you will recover the name of ‘United States,’ which is now in jeopardy.”

It is this proposal which intrigues me the most. I have puzzled over why Rev. Thompson would believe

that a Constitutional Monarchy would be preferable to the democratic government of the United States. I believe the answer lies in the hereditary nature of the monarchy and the long-term stability that it offers. At the time of Rev. Thompson's letter, Britain was ruled by Queen Victoria, the longest reigning monarch in Britain's history, until that distinction was recently achieved by Britain's current monarch, Queen Elizabeth II. Even though the monarch may not rule absolutely, she provides, both in Thompson's time and in ours, a focus for patriotism and confidence in government.

Except for Britain's Constitutional Monarchy, Europe's attempts at self-government had failed or were struggling. Europeans saw the American contest as "a decisive showdown between the forces of *popular* versus *hereditary* sovereignty, *democracy* versus *aristocracy*, *free* versus *slave* labor, all rolled into one grand epic battle...it was the final test of what both sides referred to as the republican experiment."⁵ Diplomatic historian Howard Jones writes, "The republican experiment, long ridiculed by the Old World, had finally imploded, exposing the myriad weaknesses of a popular government now collapsing in anarchy."⁶

President Lincoln, however, never wavered in his faith in the Union and democracy. He based this faith on the ideals set forth in the Declaration of Independence. As early as 1838, in a speech to the Young Men's Lyceum in Springfield, he declared, "Their [the Founding Fathers'] ambition aspired to display before an admiring world, a practical demonstration of the truth of a proposition, which had hitherto been considered, at best no better, than problematical; namely, *the capability of a people to govern themselves*."⁷ In his First Inaugural Address, on the very eve of secession and civil war, he proclaimed, "Why should there not be a patient confidence in the ultimate justice of the people? Is there any better, or equal hope, in the world?"⁸

But it was on November 19, 1863, at Gettysburg, that President Lincoln crystallized his vision, his prayer, for the nation. First he hearkened back to his Touchstone, the Declaration of Independence: "Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." Then he brought those ideals into the present: "Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure...that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish

from the earth."⁹ Doyle writes, "Goldwyn Smith, an Oxford University history professor, commented from England, 'Not a sovereign in Europe, however trained from the cradle for state pomps, and however prompted by statesmen and courtiers, could have uttered himself more regally than did Lincoln at Gettysburg.'"¹⁰

Rev. Thompson, and the rest of Europe, underestimated Lincoln's commitment to the Union. Jones argues it was "the inability of Europeans to understand the Lincoln administration's devotion to Union and emphasis on the integrated nature of slavery to that Union, which led them to interpret the war as a senseless struggle between a Confederacy too large and populous for anyone to deny its independence and a Union too stubborn to admit to the futility of returning to its prewar position."¹¹

President Lincoln also espoused a different vision of the United States in the wake of a Union victory, which he articulated in his Second Inaugural Address: a vision of forgiveness and reconciliation. "With malice toward none, with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just, and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations."¹²

**By Karen D. Whitlock
Volunteer**

NOTES:

¹Henry Thompson to Abraham Lincoln, 31 August 1861, Abraham Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

²Philip Bye, East Sussex Records Office at The Keep. Mr. Bye provided biographical information on Rev. Henry Thompson.

³Don H. Doyle, *The Cause of All Nations: An International History of the American Civil War* (New York: Basic Books, 2015), 7.

⁴Burns, Ken, *The Civil War* television series. 1990.

⁵Doyle, *Cause of All Nations*, 7.

⁶Howard Jones, *Blue and Gray Diplomacy: A History of Union and Confederate Foreign Relations* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 2.

⁷Report of Address Before the Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield, Illinois, 27 January 1838, *Sangamo Journal* (Springfield, IL), 3 February 1838, 2:3-5.

⁸Abraham Lincoln, First Inaugural Address, 4 March 1861, Abraham Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

⁹Abraham Lincoln, Address Delivered at the Dedication of the Cemetery at Gettysburg, 19 November 1863, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, Springfield, IL.

¹⁰Doyle, *Cause of All Nations*, 283.

¹¹Jones, *Blue and Gray Diplomacy*, 4.

¹²Abraham Lincoln, Second Inaugural Address, 4 March 1865, Abraham Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

PERSPECTIVES ON ABRAHAM LINCOLN RESOURCES FROM A GERMAN FAN (AND BLOGGER)

[Editor's Note: In August, several websites maintained by the Papers of Abraham Lincoln were victims of malicious hacks and were down for several days to a few weeks. During that period, Angela Mayer from Rüsselsheim, Germany, contacted the company that designed the MyLincoln mobile website for the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, about the status of The Lincoln Log. Happily, that correspondence led to a virtual introduction to Ms. Mayer, who not only enjoys studying Lincoln but also publishes her own blog, All Things Lincoln (<http://allthingslincoln.tumblr.com/>). We asked her to share her thoughts on using electronic resources on Abraham Lincoln.]

When studying American History in German schools and universities, students often avoid classes about the Civil War and, by default, Abraham Lincoln. Older semesters will warn the freshmen of “the war where all the battles have two names” which prolongs the time of study considerably.

Listening to these people was the biggest mistake I ever made. It deprived me of Abraham Lincoln for almost 20 years and yet, “meeting” him in the 21st century makes getting to know him a lot easier than it might have been back in the 1990s.

I was properly introduced to the 16th President, in September of 2012, by a National Park Service Ranger in Washington, D.C. While I did enjoy the statues, it was a little booklet with Lincoln’s early speeches that aroused my curiosity and spurred an interest to study him that has only grown over the last three years. As a bookworm, I was delighted to discover the book-tower at the Learning Center that promised enough reading material for many years to come.

While biographies are a great read, I always feel the need to verify every fact on which an author’s opinion is based, and I learned that this is especially important in the case of studying Abraham Lincoln. Twenty years ago, trips to the various libraries and museums that house the two million words Lincoln left for posterity to study, would have been unavoidable. Nowadays, much of his writing is just a click away.

I know that I am not just speaking for myself because I recently polled the people that follow a blog I installed in order to stay in touch with the younger generation of Lincoln enthusiasts. For reasons unknown to me, the numbers of followers recently surged from 20 to over 600 within a few days, with many people asking questions, requesting sources or simply debating Lincoln-related topics.



Angela Mayer with Lincoln statue in Pontiac, Illinois

What surprised me was the serious interest in history the group of 14 to 21 year old people has, and how committed they are to facts. Online resources like thelincolnlog.org or lawpracticeofabrahamlincoln.org allow me not only to simply find those facts adventitiously – but to actually seek them out and share them along with a reputable source.

They also allow us to study beyond other people’s opinions and help us develop our own. While I agree that personal contacts always surpass a mere online friendship, those resources are often what make the former a possibility in the first place.

The Facebook page of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum once published one of my pictures that a renowned photographer of Lincoln statues saw and contacted me about. After I was allowed to assist him unearthing a somewhat lost statue in Austria, we became good friends and have visited each other on several occasions.

When I was not able to obtain a ticket for this year’s commemoration at Ford’s Theatre, a friend from the Roger J. Norton discussion board sent me one of her extras and made it possible for me to attend. A long and intense debate over Lincoln’s relationship with Habeas Corpus ended with a new friend in France whom I look forward to meeting in just a few weeks in Washington.

There are many more examples but I think those mentioned show how grateful I am to be able to study about Abraham Lincoln even though the people involved are not in the same room (or even on the same continent), and are of different age groups and cultures.

I am confident that these resources will help further other projects as well; and given that Abraham Lincoln himself once owned a German Newspaper and his widow spent a considerable amount of time in Frankfurt, one could be to enhance his presence in my own country.

By Angela Mayer

MEIGS VETOES THE PRESIDENT

Only a select few of the hundreds of office and commission seekers who bothered, beset, and bedeviled Abraham Lincoln throughout his presidency actually came away with the prized presidential endorsement scrawled on note cards or on the backs of application letters to aid them in their quest. Even fewer aspirants could boast of an actual letter, no matter how brief, in the president's own hand that might be used to pry open the doors of the government departments and pave the way to some official position. Ranking among a truly select group was Alfred A. McGaffey, who was the beneficiary of not one, but two, presidential letters plus an endorsement in support of his campaign to become an army quartermaster.

Little is known about Alfred McGaffey personally except that in 1861 he was approximately 40 years old, had been born in New York, and had been one of the many contractors that in the previous decade had helped construct Washington's new aqueduct.¹ Early in June 1861 McGaffey had begun angling for a military appointment and had made the acquaintanceship of Ward H. Lamon, Lincoln's friend and sometimes bodyguard. Lamon, who was attempting to raise a mixed force brigade of loyal Virginians, believed that commanders could select their own quartermasters and therefore wrote to Lincoln asking for McGaffey's appointment because he "has been with me a number of months and I find him one of the most efficient and thorough businessmen I ever met with—his services have been invaluable to me in raising and organizing my men." Lamon added that "If the President can have him appointed...I sincerely hope it may be done."² McGaffey then wrote to the president himself.

**Alfred A. McGaffey to Abraham Lincoln
11 November 1861**

Washington DC
November 11th 1861

Hon. A. Lincoln

President of the United States

Dear Sir—At the request of Col Ward. H. Lamon, I most respectfully apply for a place as Assistant or Brigade Quartermaster For my qualifications for the place would refer you to the Quartermaster General Montgomery C Meigs, Hon W^m. L. Hodge, Col Ward H. Lamon and the accompanying letters one of which was written by order of Leut General Scott to secure me the situation The

others by his honor R. A. Wallack Mayor and Hon Ed. C. Carrington District Attorney for the District of Columbia

Verry respectfully Your
Obd^t Servant
A A. M^cGaffey

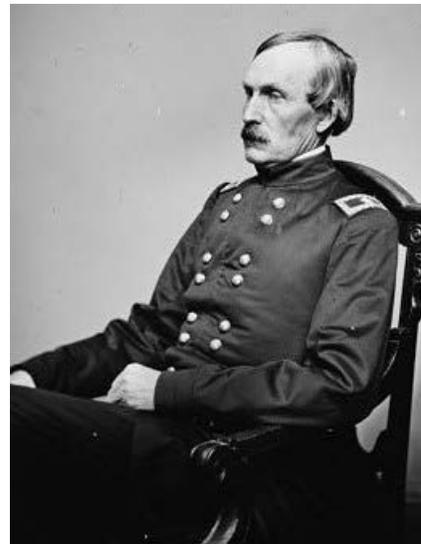
Most of the testimonials mentioned in McGaffey's letter were duly enclosed. Schuyler Hamilton wrote that McGaffey had been faithful in discharging the duties entrusted to him by General Winfield Scott, and was "an active & energetic man." Richard Wallach, Washington's first Republican mayor, added that McGaffey was a friend with excellent administrative and executive capabilities "quick apprehension & ready discernment... just the man for the place & occasion," and Edward C. Carrington, Washington's District Attorney called McGaffey, his former client, "a thorough business man and a most worthy correct and estimable gentleman."³ Backed by such seemingly excellent recommendations, Lincoln endorsed McGaffey's application letter,

Respectfully submitted to the War Department.

A. Lincoln

Nov. 12, 1861⁴

Perhaps because Lamon's proposed brigade of loyal Virginians never achieved full strength and was divided among other Virginia and Maryland regiments, General James Cooper began to seek McGaffey's services.⁵ Cooper was a Maryland-born Whig politician who had read law with Thaddeus Stevens and in the course



General James Cooper

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress

of his public career had represented Pennsylvania in both houses of the United States Congress. In May 1861, thanks to his political clout and Border State birth, Lincoln appointed him a brigadier general to recruit "loyal Marylanders."⁶

When Cooper made known his desire to have McGaffey fill an open slot within his command, the president sought to accommodate him and sent a letter to Adjutant General Lorenzo Thomas concerning the appointment.

**Abraham Lincoln to Lorenzo Thomas
19 November 1861**

Executive Mansion

Nov. 19, 1861

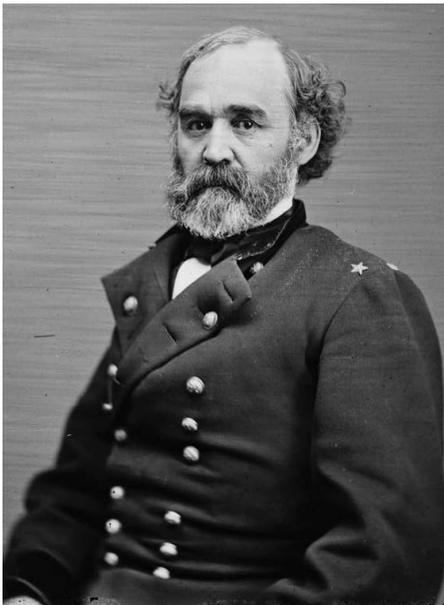
Adj^t General Thomas

Dear Sir:

The bearer of this, Gen. Cooper, says his Ass^t Q^r M^r Perkins has resigned, and that he, Gen. Cooper, wishes, Albert A. M^cGaffey, appointed to fill the vacancy, & to serve with his, Gen. Cooper's Brigade. If there be no mistake in the facts, let M^cGaffey be appointed.

Yours truly
A. Lincoln

Cooper wrote to Thomas the same day enclosing the president's letter and asking that McGaffey be appointed forthwith as the president had agreed.⁷



General Montgomery C. Meigs

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress

There may have been no "mistake in the facts" and the president may have been amenable, but a roadblock in the form of M o n t g o m e r y C. Meigs, the Quartermaster General of the United States, then threatened to derail any chance of M c G a f f e y ' s e v e r g e t t i n g h i s c o m m i s s i o n .

Likely hearing that Meigs was not enamored of the choice, Lincoln dashed off a brief letter to the general soliciting his frank opinion of McGaffey's appointment.

**Abraham Lincoln to Montgomery Meigs
4 January 1862**

Executive Mansion

Jan. 4, 1862

Gen. Meigs
My dear Sir

Gen. Cooper, who will present this, is anxious to have Alfred A. M^cGaffey appointed Q. M for his Brigade; & I am willing to oblige him, only that I have

an impression that you have some objection. If you have not, so write below this, and he may be appointed.

Yours truly
A. Lincoln

Meigs tersely endorsed the letter:

The Q M Genl cannot recommend this appointment
M C Meigs QMG⁸

Meigs may have declined the appointment for reasons reaching back to the 1850s when he and McGaffey had dealings in building the Washington Aqueduct, even though others had praised the contractor for his energy, efficiency, and speed.⁹ The Quartermaster-General's refusal compelled General Cooper to write Lincoln again on January 6, 1862, to explain that Meigs's objections stemmed from "the belief that McGaffey is a gambler; and believing this I can certainly find no fault [with] opposition to him." But "on inquiry amongst those who have known McGaffey for years under circumstances that would have been almost sure to develop a propensity for gambling and where opportunities for its indulgence would seldom be wanting (namely, amongst Rail Road contractors) I have been assured that so far from being a gambler, he has so persistently refused to indulge in games of hazard as to incur the charge of a want of that sociability, which players allege is largely developed at the card table." Cooper believed the gambling charges rested "on one or two bets made on the results of the last Presidential election."¹⁰

Although Cooper could discover no other provable offenses, rumors persisted that McGaffey was in some way connected to the disreputable contractor transactions in building the Grand Trunk Rail Way in Canada. "I think it is hard that McGaffey should be made to suffer upon what at best, is only a suspicion," Cooper continued, "I am willing to take the risk of his appointment...[believing he] will do his duty faithfully and intelligently, and that as there is no tangible evidence against him, there is no just ground to withhold from him the appointment...I beg your Excellency, without desiring to appear importunate, that if you can see your way clear to do it, that you will appoint him."¹¹

Lincoln, knowing Meigs's zeal in performing his duty and his nearly maniacal scrupulousness in the handling of public monies, allowed the quartermaster-general's veto of his wishes to stand. No record of McGaffey's appointment in any capacity has been found, and, considering Meig's disapproval of him and

Lincoln's penchant for not overruling subordinates with ethical doubts about a candidate's fitness, this result is hardly surprising.

While McGaffey's wartime career remains shrouded in mystery, something is known about his postwar dealings. He and several other individuals bought up surplus weapons and ammunition as federal armies demobilized at the end of the Civil War and then shipped them for resale to Mexican republican bands battling the forces propping up the imperial regime of Emperor Maximilian. In a case of a nineteenth-century arms deal gone bad, McGaffey and his partners lost \$20,000 in payment they had just received when their vessel, the schooner *Mary Bertrand*, foundered off the mouth of the Rio Grande and its specie cargo was then seized by Mexican military commanders when it reached shore.¹² It would seem that McGaffey's ship, like his previous application to Lincoln to become an army quartermaster, sank out of sight for mysterious and unknowable reasons.

By David J. Gerleman
Assistant Editor

NOTES:

¹United States Census 1860, City and County of Washington, Ward 2, Page 201, Line 17; Unsigned and undated note, NA RG 92 E225 Box 629 (old).

²Ward H. Lamon to Abraham Lincoln, 11 November 1861, NA RG 92 E225 Box 629 (old). Ward Hill Lamon (1828-1893) was a personal friend and self-appointed presidential bodyguard. Lincoln appointed him U.S. Marshal of the District of Columbia.

³Schuyler Hamilton to Ward H. Lamon, 17 June 1861; Richard Wallach to Ward H. Lamon, 20 June 1861; Edward C. Carrington to Ward H. Lamon, 22 June 1861, NA RG 92 E225 Box 629 (old). Schuyler Hamilton (1822-1903) was Alexander Hamilton's grandson who attended West Point, served in the Mexican War, and became an aide-camp to Winfield Scott. He served in the western theater until sickness compelled him to resign in 1863. Richard Wallach (1816-1881) was elected the first Republican mayor of Washington, DC, after James G. Berret refused to take a loyalty oath in 1861. Wallach was first elected to the Washington Common Council in 1846, and in 1849 he was appointed by Zachary Taylor as U.S. Marshal for the District of Columbia and served until 1853 before joining the Board of Aldermen. Edward C. Carrington was United States Attorney for the District of Columbia from 1861-1870.

⁴Alfred A. McGaffey to Abraham Lincoln, 11 November 1861; encloses letters from William L. Hodge, Schuyler Hamilton, Richard Wallach, and Edward C. Carrington. NA RG 92 E225 Box 629 (old).

⁵Richard Nelson Current, *Lincoln's Loyalists: Union Soldiers from the Confederacy*, (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1992), 11-12; 14.

⁶James Cooper (1810-1863) was a lawyer, soldier, and politician, who lived much of his life in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. He served in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives and represented that state in both houses of Congress. Cooper briefly served under Franz Sigel in the Army of the Shenandoah until poor health caused him to be assigned commandant of Camp Chase near Columbus, Ohio, where he died in 1863. *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, "James Cooper," <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=C000753>

⁷James Cooper to Lorenzo Thomas, 19 November 1861; encloses Abraham Lincoln to Lorenzo Thomas, 19 November 1861. NA RG 92 E225 Box 629 (old). Lorenzo Thomas (1804-1875) was Adjutant General of the Army from 1861 until he retired in 1869.

⁸Abraham Lincoln to Montgomery C. Meigs, 4 January 1862, Private Collection. Montgomery Cunningham Meigs (1816-1892) was a career United States Army officer, civil engineer, construction engineer, and Quartermaster General during and after the American Civil War.

⁹*Report of the Secretary of War, Message of the President to the Two Houses of Congress at the Second Session of the Thirty-fifth Congress* (Washington: William A. Harris, Printer, 1858), 293-94; 296. McGaffey was involved in building bridge #3 over the reservoir and the laying of cast iron mains.

¹⁰James Cooper to Abraham Lincoln, 6 January 1862, Abraham Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress.

¹¹James Cooper to Abraham Lincoln, 6 January 1862, Abraham Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress. The Grand Trunk Railway Company of Canada was incorporated in 1852 to build a railway line between Montreal and Toronto with the charter soon extended east to Portland, Maine; by 1860, the company verged on bankruptcy.

¹²A. A. McGaffey to Lewis D. Campbell, 17 December 1866, *Papers Relating to Foreign Affairs, Accompanying the Annual Message of the President to the Second Session Fortieth Congress*, II, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1868), 342, 345.

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