April 23, 1930

My dear Mr. Angle:

I am sorry that there has been so long a delay in replying to your letter of March 19th, with the enclosed copy of the brief report of the "Lost Speech." I naturally was much interested in seeing it. I have compared the report with the Whitney restoration and it seems to me that if not all, at least all but one, of the points touched on by the Alton reporter are to be found more fully developed in Whitney's production. Naturally a report of one hundred and fifty words would not elaborate points in the way that Whitney attempted to elaborate those that he had saved in his notes.

Federal Edition
Vol. II
PP. 248
tp
254

For example - the Alton report says, "He enumerated pressing reasons of the present movement" etc. The first pages of the Whitney report, (I am using the version to be found in the appendix of Volume I of Whitney's Life of Lincoln) - are given to these "pressing reasons."

P. 249 - 250

The Alton report of Lincoln's readiness to fuse with anyone who would unite with him to oppose slave power. This seems to me to be the theme of the Whitney paragraph beginning on page 329, running on to 330.

P. 252
275

"The bugbear of disunion" is hinted at in more than one page of Whitney - see 332. "Law will give way to violence" etc. And page 353, "We will say to southern disunionists, we won't go out of the union and you shan't."

The preservation of the principles of the union, as well as its territorial integrity of one point of the Alton report runs through the Whitney report.

P. 253

Might not a reporter easily have made out of the sentences, beginning on page 332, "Revolutions do not go backward," etc., what the Alton report calls "the sentiment in favor of white slavery." Lincoln's sentences were in the nature of a taunt, as I understand them. He uses something of the kind in other places. I do not remember any reference to slave papers holding any such views.

P. 256
257
258
259

The sentence, "Douglas once claimed against him that democracy favored more than his principles - the individual rights of man," certainly is what Lincoln is saying in his historical review of the early sentiment against slavery in Virginia and his appeal to the early opinions of Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Lee, Henry, Mason, Pendleton - page 336 and 337. The Alton pins it

Digital Images, 2011. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

to Douglas - which was good journalism.

The last point in the Alton report charging that the Black Democracy was endeavoring to cite Henry Clay to reconcile old Whigs, etc., is not in the Whitney report, save by implication.

Taking it all in all it seems to me that these one hundred and fifty words might have been what a reporter, thinking over the speech later, and being forced to put his report into few words, might have made out of the Whitney report. Short reports of this kind rarely come very close to what is said. They cover the points which struck the reporter or the ones he or his editor want to emphasize.

Whitney, of course, never claimed to have made a complete report. I do not remember any printing of his "Lost Speech" that did not emphasize the fact that he simply did the best he could with the notes which he had kept so long. You see what he says in his Life of Lincoln, page 261 - Volume I, that his notes were very imperfect and that he reproduced as best he could the principle parts; that is, he does not claim that he covered all the points.

Of course, you are familiar in what he says in his "Life on the Circuit with Lincoln."

One point to be considered, I think, is the Alton report does not - and could not, in the brief space, give any idea that the speech was stirring. From these lines you would never get an idea that it played the part that it did in fusing the elements which made up the Bloomington Convention. Certainly there would be no reason to suppose that it reported a speech which was to become a great tradition.

The Whitney notes, apart from the obvious padding and from the excessive introduction of the words - "applause" - "sensation," etc., do give a sense of the quality of the speech and of Lincoln's unusual emotion.

Have you any idea who made this report for the Alton paper? I hope you will let me know if anything more turns up. It is an interesting find and you ought to follow it up as closely as you can.

I have not written you about your distinguished looking volume of "New Letters and Papers," because I have been back so short a time that I have not had leisure to go over it. It goes without saying that you have made a substantial addition to the collected works. With all good wishes

Very sincerely yours

Digital Images, 2011. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

My dear Mr. Angle:

I am sorry that there has been so long a delay in replying to your letter of March 19th, with the enclosed copy of the brief report of the Lost Speech. Of course, I naturally was much interested in seeing it. I have compared the report with the Whitney restoration and it seems to me that not all, at least all but one, of the points touched on by the Alton reporter are to be found more fully developed in Whitney's production. Naturally a report of 150 words would not elaborate points in the way that Whitney attempted to elaborate those that he had saved in his notes.

The pressing reasons of the present movement Referred to are: Make up the first pages of the Whitney report, for instance. I am using the versions to be found in the appendix of Volume 1 of Whitney's Life of Lincoln.) His readiness to unite with anyone who would unite to him, unite with him to oppose slave power is the theme of the Paragraph beginning on Page 329, running on to 330.

The bug bear of this union is hinted in more than one page, as on page 332. "Law will give way to violence, etc." And from page 353, we will think of the southern disunionment. We won't go out of the union and you shan't."

The preservation of the principles of the union, as well as its territories integrity runs through the Mr. Whitney's report.

A reporter might easily have made out of the sentences, beginning page 332, "Revolutions do not go backward, etc. to the end of the paragraph, what the Alton report calls sentiment in favor of white slavery. Lincoln's sentences were in the nature of a as I understand them. He uses something of the kind in other places. I do not remember any reference to slave papers, however, holding any such views.

The sentence, "Douglas once claimed against him that democracy favored more than his principles - the individual rights of man." That certainly is what Lincoln is saying in his historical review of the early settlement against Virginia and his appeal to the earlier opinions of Washington, Jefferson, Madison and Lee, Henry, Mason, Pendleton - Page 336, 337.

Digital Images, 2011. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

The last point of the Alton report charging that the Black Democracy was endeavoring to cite Henry Clay to reconcile old Whigs, etc., is not in the Whitney report, save by implication.

Taking it all in all it seems to me that these 150 words might have been what a reporter, thinking over the speech later, and being caused to put his report in few words, might have made out of the preverted Whitney report. Short reports of this kind rarely come very close to what is said. They cover the points but obstruct the reporter, the ones that he or his editor wants to emphasize frequently.

Of course, Whitney never claimed to have made a complete and perfect report. I never have seen any printing of the report that did not emphasize the fact that he simply did the best he could with the notes which he had kept so long. You see what he says in his Life of Lincoln, page 61 - Volume I, His notes read perfect and that he reproduced the best he could the principle parts; that is, he does not claim that he had covered all the points.

Of course, you are familiar in what he says in his Life of the Circuit with Lincoln."

One point I should think should be considered, is the Alton report does not and could not, in the brief space, give any idea that the speech was a story. From these lines you would never get an idea that it played the part that it did in fusing the elements, which made up the Bloomington Convention. Certainly there would be no reason to suppose that it would become a great tradition.

The Whitney notes, apart from the obvious padding and from the excessive introduction of the word "applause" condition, etc., do give a sense of the stirring quality of the speech of Lincoln's unusual emotion.

Taking it all in all, the Whitney speech does give you something that explains the Alton matters, so it seems to me.

Have you any idea who made this report for the Alton paper? I hope you will let me know if anything more turns up. It is an interesting find and you ought to follow it up as closely as you can.

I have not written you about your distinguished looking volume of, "New Letters and Papers", because I have been back so short a time that I have not had leisure to go over it. It goes without saying that you have made a substantial addition to collected works.

With all good wishes
Very sincerely yours

Digital Images, 2011. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.