

Herndon-Weik Letters:

Went to the G. A. Baker & Company yesterday afternoon (June 28, 1933) to look at the H.W. Wood collection. They have it in charge for some two years, I gather. The Congressional Library would like it, but Putnam says that he cannot go around with a tin cup begging for it - begging for the money. Harzoff, who seems to be the expert and the general boss, is a little sore about the million and a half that Congress spent for the collection of Lincoln[?] bought under the Hoover administration. He has a long story and says that it ~~has~~ not, with the exception of the copy of the bible which is in perfect condition, a real treasure. The ~~Lincoln~~^{other pieces} are not so much, that is that the majority of ~~the col~~^{the col} -
Lincoln belongs to the last ten years of the 15th century when there were printers scattered all over the place.

I spent something over an hour glancing at the Lincoln manuscripts. It is particularly rich in legal papers, some four or five hundred, evidently most if not all of them, papers that were left with the firm. Harzoff says that they would belong to the firm. I think Robert Lincoln ^{thought} ~~said~~ they ought to come to him, ~~but~~ from the letters that he wrote Herndon after his father's death. I did not have time to go into them very much, but looked at the papers in Adam's case.

+ on vellum - came from a monastery in Tyrol
Purchased \$250.00 - H.

these
 There are several sheets in Lincoln's hand here, Put/together
 with the copies of the papers that were published in the
 newspaper and you would have a fine bit of material. I am
 pretty sure that a careful study of these documents would give
~~rather~~ an excellent idea of Lincoln as a lawyer. They run from
 1836 ^{Suit} thirty-six, the first page, up to the time he went into the
 Presidency, that is as long as he was an active lawyer. Every
 year a case. All of the ^{letters to} ~~of~~ Herndon there and what must be
 very valuable analyzed - all of the letters of Herndon to
 Weik answering questions. I do not know if the Weik letters
 are there - those I did not find. But there must be a hundred
 and as
 or more Herndon letters/ he was a valuable person on paper,
 there would be much of real value.

I was particularly interested to see the Seripp
 document, but there is nothing more of Seripp in regard to
 Lincoln's ancestors than what appears in his letter of
 to
 S./H. - the letter from which Herndon quotes in his life. There
 is really nothing to base the term of ^{Nancy Hanks'} illegitimacy on.

Seripp says that he has never told anybody
 what Mr. Lincoln told him.

There is a letter which would work into an
 analysis of this matter from John Herndon written in 1866.
 He evidently made his first inquiry of Seripp in 1865, though
 I see no reference to the letter.

Scripp ^{answered} ~~has written~~ as he ^{is} quotes in his book.

He evidently had then his correspondence with Dennis Hanks and he writes to Scripp in September '66 saying that he had seen or written to these persons, which I take it he means the Hanks', and

(they knew nothing, (Quote)

I did not have time to examine further the papers and saw none of Herndon's letters to Weik. I also did not examine the Dennis Hanks letter, though the one in which he said he ^{had - his} spoke ^{his} interpretation to Herndon would make ~~him~~ Nancy Hanks' ^{"I am} ~~"first born"~~ ^{she cannot, is a father} which he ~~is~~ ^{is} evidently there.

So far as I was able to get from the ^{a look at -} draft of these particular documents it looks as if there was something in the theory I have always held that Herndon worked up the in his imagination, ^{made up} case, / his circumstantial account of the rising of Lincoln in 1850 in which he told him about his birth as reported in his first book. - I do not like to say an invention but his suspicion and his imagination developed ^{as to the story as} something like he developed the theory of Mr. Lincoln running away from the wedding ceremony arranged with Mary Todd, ~~something~~ the way he built up his ~~hysterical~~ lectures on Ann Rutledge and on Lincoln's religion. There was a faintness of mystery about the origin, unquestionably, and ^{it is clear} also that Lincoln felt deeply

the poverty and meanness of his origin. He did not want
 it *expressed* and I think that ^{his} ~~in~~ reluctance to have much
 said of this as Seripp told ~~at Herndon.~~

there was a certain protection of the family
 as well as of his own pride. Very interesting psychology
 all the way through.

I told Harzoff that if the collection had to
 be sold that he should make a group of the Seripp *downright* ~~business,~~
 and
 getting a first edition of Seripp, whatever documents and
 material he could find about Seripp himself and his relation
 to Lincoln.

Also, copies of Herndon's first edition and of
 Lamon's book showing how they handled this material. Also
 it would be well to put in the Dennis Hanks, making this a
 unit with comments, *it-* ~~and which~~ could not but be valuable.

I am not sure but that would be a good way to
 take other items - the Illinois Central case - the Adams case -
collection on special case
 build up of folio with a few books with comments which would
 give particular value and which would be of use to students.
 At any rate such a thing as the Adams documents should not be
 separated and sold ~~as~~ purely as autographs as Harzoff suggests
 they would be if the collection had to go under the hammer.

I suggested to him to continue with the
Library
 Congressional. If I go to Washington to see Mrs. Roosevelt
 I would take the opportunity of taking it up with her and find
 out whether it would be possible. I might see Howe, also.

I certainly should see Putnam. J.S.P. suggests that I talk with Rainey about it. That seems to me the best suggestion in regard to our Congress. At all events it looks to me like my duty in the matter was clearly laid out.

Harzoff suggested that if I was able to get them a sale that they would make a substantial contribution to my favorite charity which I told him very promptly I would not consider. If we do go on, and if I am really able to do something, what I am going to ask is to treat me kindly in the way of Lincoln items that I may want for the Allegheny collection. ~~If I do put these in~~ but I am not going to talk about that yet awhile.

J.S.P. thinks of writing to Ivy Lee to ask young baby Ra to buy the thing for the Congressional Library. I am afraid if he bought it he would give it, to Brown. If the Congressional can't get it then the ~~Lincoln~~ ^{Allegheny} Historical library ought to have it and there Logan Hay might be of use. If he can't do, I suggested ~~getting~~ ^{giving} the Lincoln Insurance Co. and I would be willing to write Dr. Warren and the President.

The thing that they could get would be so valuable to them and there is so much of this so popular Southwestern ~~in collector~~ ^{in collector} Although to/Indiana, it would be very proper there. I would not feel so safe about it, ~~before~~ after all that is a private enterprise

and if the day should come when the Insurance ^{Co,} fell upon hard times
they might look to their Lincoln collection as a source of
revenue and sell it, breaking it up. Awful thought.