

February 3, 1938

My dear Mr. Putnam:

I hope you have not quite forgotten me and that you will not mind my asking through whose intercession the Lincoln papers came to the Congressional Library.

It was thirty or more years ago that I asked Robert Lincoln with whom I had a pleasant acquaintance, to let me examine the Lincoln papers. He refused flatly and told me he was thinking of destroying them, his reason being that there were letters from associates of his father which if made public would give pain to the families of certain men who had been associated with him. He did not want to be a party to pulling down any man's reputation.

I remember going at once to you. You told me you were already in communication with Mr. Lincoln, that you hoped to persuade him to give you the papers. The fact that he did so had led me to believe that you succeeded.

Now there has just appeared a book called, "The Hidden Lincoln" - an unexpurgated collection of the Herndon papers. In the Preface Mr. Emanuel Hertz claims that Robert Lincoln was on the point of destroying the papers and that it was Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler who saved them and persuaded Mr. Lincoln to give them to you. He publishes Dr. Butler's account of the episode.

Have you any recollection of how the papers were secured for the Congressional Library? Is Dr. Butler after all responsible?

I will greatly appreciate your recollection of the matter. I have in manuscript form my account of my talk with Robert Lincoln about the papers.

My appeal to you, my supposition that it was through
your intercession that the papers were saved. I
do not want to publish this in the form it stands
if I am wrong. I shall greatly appreciate it if
you will put me right.

Hoping that you are well and enjoy-
ing life, believe me

Very sincerely yours

Mr. Herbert Putnam
Library of Congress
Washington, D. C.