

Abraham Lincoln Journal Example I:

April 9, 1865

On April 6th I sent a dispatch to Major General Weitzel instructing him to allow the leaders of the former Virginia legislature the opportunity to meet and discuss the withdraw of the Virginia troops. Afterwards around nine o'clock I decided to visit the Union field hospital at City point and the horrors I saw were unimaginable as fathers and sons lay wounded or dying upon small blood stained military cots. The sounds of those dying men and their pain ricochet in my mind only to mingle with the click of rifles and military drills being executed by healthy men just beyond the tent flaps.¹ It is my intention to make the transition from insurgents to citizens as smooth and seamless as possible. I hope that my concessions will reduce hostilities and prevent additional loss of life on both sides.² I want to bring the southern states back into the Union and prevent Congress from imposing punitive measures against our brethren. "I must bear the horrors of war, too. Oh, this war! This awful, awful war".³

"He from whom all blessings flow, must not be forgotten. A call for a national thanksgiving is being prepared and will be duly promulgated".⁴ My fondest desire has come to pass; a messenger just arrived and informed me that General Lee has surrendered to General Grant and it is up to me to try and bring about reconstruction. There is one part of me that just wants to continue to float along the river and allow the gentle rhythmic motion of the *River Queen* soothe my troubled soul and help me temporarily forget my troubles. Oh how I wish I were back home in Springfield or traveling towards California enjoying the company of Mrs. Lincoln and the boys. God almighty how am I to bring about the reconstruction of the insurgents when there is no one true political entity in which to negotiate with? "No one man has the authority to give up the rebellion for any other man".⁵ How will I keep those blood thirsty northern vultures in Congress from picking clean the bones of the southern states and taking advantage of the poor men and women hurt the most by this bloody war?

¹ Wade, Hall One Man's Lincoln Kentucky Humanities Council, Inc. 1998. Pg 68

² Wilson & Davis, Herndon's Informants University of Illinois Press 1998. Pg 413.

³ Wade, Hall One Man's Lincoln Kentucky Humanities Council, Inc. 1998. Pg 70

⁴ Grafton, John. Dover Thrift Editions, Great Speeches Abraham Lincoln. Pg 109

⁵ Grafton, John. Dover Thrift Editions, Great Speeches Abraham Lincoln. Pg 109

Abraham Lincoln Journal Example II:

June 26, 1833

Today I spoke to a large crowd outside the Springfield courthouse and Geo Forquer stood up and decided to give an impromptu speech stating that “This young man will have to be taken down, and I am truly sorry that the task devolves on me”. The crowd demanded I give Forquer the swift set down he deserved. “I made my rebuttal short and sweet, like the old woman’s dance”.⁶ Forquer started his speech by saying “this young man would have to be taken down, alluding to me (Abraham Lincoln); I am not so young in years as I am in the tricks and trades of a politician; but live long, or die young, I would rather die now, than, like the gentleman change my politics, and simultaneous with the change, receive an office worth three thousand dollars per year, and then have to erect a lightning rod over my house, to protect a guilty conscience from an offended god”.⁷ I find that I do not regret my words to the George Forquer but I do regret not making a point of asking why he felt the need to change his political views in favor of money when the true cost was the respect of his constituents and his friends and family.

Later I took a leisurely stroll and stopped to talk with some farmers and was able to deliver some letters on my way to Rowan Herndon’s house. I know that I am running by common consent and as such I do not need to make a formal declaration of principles.⁸ However I feel it would benefit me to go out into the community and do a little electioneering. I must say Rowan sets a fine table and it being harvest time I was able to take my dinner into the fields and talk to some of the men and enjoy the some good old storytelling. They agreed to vote for me provided I could prove I was a man of labor and could make a hand. I must say taking the cradle reminded me of working with paw on the farm in Indiana.⁹ “If elected, I shall consider the whole people of Sangamon my constituents, as well as those that oppose me as those that support me. While acting as their representative, I shall be governed by their will, on all subjects upon which I have the means of knowing what their will is; and upon all others, I shall do what my own judgment teaches me will best advance their interests.”¹⁰

⁶ Platt, Benjamin, Lincoln’s New Salem. Americana House, Chicago Illinois. 1954. Pg 85

⁷ Wilson & Davis, Herndon’s Informants University of Illinois Press 1998. Pg 589

⁸ Platt, Benjamin, Lincoln’s New Salem. Americana House, Chicago Illinois. 1954. Pg 114

⁹ Platt, Benjamin, Lincoln’s New Salem. Americana House, Chicago Illinois. 1954. Pg 115

¹⁰ Platt, Benjamin, Lincoln’s New Salem. Americana House, Chicago Illinois. 1954. Pg 128-129.