



## LINCOLN LIBRARY

Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection at Allen County Public Library

**LINCOLN'S SECRETARIES: HAY, NICOLAY, STODDARD**  
**1 box; 0.5 cubic feet**

*For additional material on Helen and John G. Nicolay, see the **Nicolay Collection**; 5 boxes, 2.8 cubic feet.*

### Biographical Notes

#### ***John George Nicolay (1832-1901)***

Born in Essingen, Bavaria, in 1832, Nicolay came to the United States with his family in 1838. After a brief career as the owner of the Pittsfield, Illinois, Whig newspaper, he moved to Springfield to clerk for the Illinois Secretary of State in 1857. There he met Abraham Lincoln. When Lincoln was nominated as the Republican presidential candidate in 1860, Nicolay became Lincoln's private secretary. He continued in that post until March 1865, when he was appointed consul resident in Paris. Before he could leave for France, however, Lincoln was assassinated, and Nicolay remained in Washington for a time to put the president's papers in order.

Nicolay served as consul in Paris until 1869. In 1872 he was appointed Marshall of the United State Supreme Court. In 1874, Nicolay convinced Robert Todd Lincoln to entrust him with the president's papers, and Nicolay and John Hay began work on their 10-volume biography of Abraham Lincoln. *Abraham Lincoln: A History* was serialized beginning in 1886 and was published in full in 1890. In 1894 the two men published a 2-volume edition of Lincoln's writings that included much previously unpublished material. Nicolay was working on a single-volume condensation of the Lincoln biography when he died in 1901.

#### ***John Milton Hay (1838-1905)***

Hay was born in 1838 in Salem, Indiana, but grew up in Warsaw, Illinois. He met John Nicolay while in school in Pittsfield. Hay left Illinois to attend Brown University, but returned after graduation to practice law with his uncle. He also renewed his friendship with Nicolay, and after Lincoln's election in 1860, Nicolay brought him into Lincoln's office staff. Hay's diary and letters written during the White House years give a valuable insider's view of the Lincoln Administration.

In April 1865, Hay was preparing to take a position as Secretary of Legation in Paris when Lincoln was shot. He was at the president's bedside when Lincoln died. Between 1865 and 1875, Hay held several foreign posts and worked for the New York *Tribune*. He and Nicolay also began writing their *History*. He continued to collaborate with Nicolay through the publication of Lincoln's writings, but then turned from writing history to foreign diplomacy. He was appointed Ambassador to the Court of St. James in 1897 and United State Secretary of State in 1898, serving under Presidents William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt. His accomplishments as a diplomat included the negotiation of an Open Door Policy with China and treaties opening the way for construction and operation of the Panama Canal. He served as Secretary of State until his death in 1905.

#### ***William Osborn Stoddard (1835-1925)***

A native of Homer, New York, where he was born in 1835, Stoddard graduated from Rochester University before moving to Illinois in 1858. As editor of West Urbana's Republican

newspaper, he began promoting Lincoln's presidential candidacy in 1859. After Lincoln was elected, Stoddard thought his support might gain him a position as the president's private secretary. Instead he received an appointment as a clerk in the Interior Department. Some time later he became an assistant to Nicolay and Hay.

Lincoln appointed Stoddard United States Marshall for the Eastern District of Arkansas in 1864, with instructions—according to Stoddard, who held Radical views on Reconstruction policy—to assure suffrage for the freedmen. He soon concluded, however, that Union military weakness in Arkansas made a “healthy state government” impossible. He resigned his post in 1866.

After leaving public service, Stoddard became a businessman, inventor, and writer. In all, he wrote over a hundred books for children and adults. His *Inside the White House in War Times* (1890) provides an insider's view of the wartime administration.

Source for biographies: Mark E. Neely, Jr., *The Abraham Lincoln Encyclopedia* (New York: De Capo Press, 1982).

### **Scope and Content**

The collection is made up predominantly of the correspondence and related documents of John Nicolay and John Hay. The correspondence consists of letters written by and to Nicolay and Hay, though none written to each other. With the exception of Nicolay's “extracts” from letters written during 1861-62 to his fiancée, Therenia Bates, and several written during the Lincoln Administration, the correspondence dates from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. There are numerous letters between Hay and Nicolay's daughter, Helen, written between 1901 and 1905. The collection also includes a number of obituary notices for Nicolay and Hay from a variety of newspapers, as well as miscellaneous materials. There are also 6 letters written by Stoddard between 1894 and 1922.

The provenance of the collection is unclear. One of the Stoddard letters and two of the Nicolay letters were purchased during the 1970s. The bulk of the material, however, appears to have originally been part of the Nicolay Collection. Presumably it was removed from that collection to create this subject-defined “secretaries” collection.

## Container List

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>
1	Hay, John M. Correspondence—Letters by JMH Correspondence—Letters to JMH Correspondence—Letters to Helen Nicolay, dated Correspondence—Letters to Helen Nicolay, undated Correspondence—Letters from Helen Nicolay Correspondence—Hay family-Helen Nicolay “Some Correspondence Between John Hay and Helen Nicolay,” <i>Lincoln Lore</i> Obituary Notices Poems, Bixby letter article, McKinley memorial address
	Nicolay, John G. Correspondence—Extracts re: Lincoln from letters to Therenia Bates [Nicolay] Correspondence—Letters by JGN Correspondence—Letters to JGN Funeral Relic Miscellaneous—Notes and Patent Obituary Notices Sympathy letters to Helen Nicolay
	Stoddard, William O. Correspondence—Letters by WOS
	William O. Stoddard Collection

Jane E. Gastineau, July 2008