

LINCOLN IN THE TELEGRAPH OFFICE

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While in certain directions the plans of the conspirators were being thwarted, other schemes were inaugurated which were dastardly and villainous in the extreme. One source of information as to such plans was our consul at Halifax, who reported as follows:

Halifax, Nova Scotia,  
November 1, 1864.

Hon. Wm. H. Seward, Secretary of State:

It is secretly asserted by secessionists here that plans have been formed and will be carried into execution by the rebels and their allies, for setting fire to the principal cities in the Northern States on the day of the Presidential Election.

M. M. Jackson,  
United States Consul.

Vague rumors of a plot to kidnap or assassinate the President had previously reached the War Department, but had been given little credence until just about this time a photograph of Lincoln had been received by Mrs. Lincoln through the mail which showed red ink-spots on the shirtfront, with a rope around the neck, the ends being drawn tautly upward. On one of his visits to the cipher-room Lincoln drew this photograph out of his high hat and told us that it had caused Mrs. Lincoln some anxiety which he did not share, as he had long ago become accustomed to seeing caricatures of himself. He added some words of surprise and sorrow that any human being could be so devoid of feeling as thus to wound the heart of an innocent woman.

A duplicate of this mutilated picture of Lincoln came by chance into the possession of Eckert under the following circumstances. While on his way to Cortlandt Street Ferry on November 26, 1864, Eckert found in a street car an unsealed envelop containing among other papers a letter giving directions, evidently referring to a kidnaping plot and also a picture of Lincoln with a rope around his neck and red ink-marks on the bosom of the shirt. These papers were afterward discovered to belong to Payne, the assassin, - see Chapter XXVII.