

<sup>Partly</sup>  
~~More or less~~ secluded from this turmoil, the telegraph office was located in the War Department building at the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and Seventeenth Street, torn down later to make way for the massive State, War and Navy building erected on the same site. The instruments had been installed in what was known as the Old Library on the second floor front, adjoining the offices of the Secretary of War. The room was lighted by five windows and part of the floor space <sup>continued to be</sup> still occupied by book alcoves, moved together and shut off by an enclosure, which, however, failed to prevent the operators getting at the books. In time, the next contiguous room was detached from the secretary's suite and given over to the cipher men. <sup>visitors</sup> Outsiders were rigorously excluded and the operators sworn to secrecy. A very good reason existed for these precautions, for, through the military telegraph centering in this office, direct communication was maintained with every arsenal, commanding general, military depot, military prison, barracks, ~~barracks~~, rendezvous, camp and fort in the Union.

Strangely, however, during the entire civil war, there was no telegraph wire in the White House. The president was obliged to go across lots, probably two hundred yards, to the War Department <sup>to</sup> get his dispatches, or wait for their delivery to him by the cavalry men who were acting as messengers to the department. The president wrote out his messages by hand, unless he directed the operator verbally, as he sometimes did. Secretary Stanton's every dispatch was likewise written out in his big bold hand. There were no typewriters nor stenographers for this work, although manifold books were kept in which recorded letter-press copies of all the messages received.

In periods of stress or field activity, Secretary Stanton slept in the the building to be near to the wires. President Lincoln, himself, <sup>stopped in at</sup> often visited these rooms <sup>daily, often</sup> several times a day, and, in fact, is said to have spent more time here during the last four years of his life than in any other place, excepting only the White House. (Bates, Lincoln in the Telegraph Office, 39.) The chair at Superintendent Eckert's desk afforded him his favorite rest, his feet on a nearby table. Messages addressed to the president, and copies of those to other officials which he ought to see, were dropped in a box provided for that purpose in the operating ~~room~~ from which, on arriving, he would take them, and go over them one by one, and then, "after some characteristic remark," proceed to consult with the secretary.

~~It is noted by Rosewater that,~~ While the Battle of Fredericksburg was in progress, Lincoln <sup>staid continuously</sup> stayed in the telegraph office all night. The attack by General Burnside, which had been ordered from Washington, commenced about 8 oclock Sunday morning. The president came over from the White House

in his slippers, and remained all day and far into the night. "At noon, Secretary Stanton, who was also present, sent an orderly out with an ice ~~pit~~ pitcher for beer and Lincoln, Stanton, Captain Fox, then Assistant Secretary of the Navy, and myself lunched on beer and crackers. Dispatches were being constantly received and the president dictated encouraging replies without writing them, standing behind me as he did so. As the day went on, the reports grew <sup>disheartening</sup> discouraging and, at night, the defeat was finally announced.

incorrect  
M. Whitman  
based on  
H.C.  
Carpenter  
interview

When it was learned that over 13,000 men were killed, the calamity seemed to crush Lincoln. He looked pale, wan and haggard. He did not get over it for a long time and, all that winter of 1863, he was downcast and depressed. He felt that the loss was his fault. Burnside had declined to take command of the army, saying that he did not feel himself competent, and Lincoln had insisted and had persuaded him. Burnside feared the responsibility. He maintained that the rebels got the orders from the War Department in some way as soon as he did, and that they could thus counteract his movements before he could execute them.."

Another incident ~~ix~~ narrated ~~xxxx~~ depicts Lincoln coming into the war telegraph office one morning and picking up a copy of Frank Leslie's which had just arrived. "In the paper was a cut representing Lincoln as a butcher, who had <sup>chopped</sup> ~~cut~~ off the heads of Mc Clellan and other generals and, with sleeves rolled up, and the gore of former decapitations on the executioner's block, was preparing to cut off Burnside's head. Lincoln laughed as he looked at the cartoon. Just then General Burnside entered. 'Here is your head, ~~xxxxxx~~ General!' said the president, pointing to the picture with a broad smile. It was not long after this that Burnside's head came off in fact and his successor was appointed."

Again <sup>it is well known</sup> ~~we are told~~ that, after the Battle of Antietam, Lincoln was much annoyed because Mc Clellan would not follow up his victory. "Lincoln sent dispatch after ~~despatch~~ dispatch to him to hurry, ~~xx~~ but every dispatch was answered with excuses. At the end of three weeks, Lincoln sent a message urging

McClellan by all means to move, and to this, McClellan replied that 'he could not move because the tongues of his horses were sore.' It was this dispatch which capped the climax in McClellan's case. Fifteen minutes after it was received, a message signed by the president sped over the wires directing McClellan to yield up his command."

Though all in the day's work, the distinction of being one of the operators <sup>who</sup> ~~wired~~ the world-famed emancipation proclamation to the commanders in <sup>in the fields</sup> accrued to Rosewater as part of his War Department service. The document, dated January 1, 1863, was delivered to him with Lincoln's signature for official transmission. "Another year commenced, and with it, perhaps, a new era in the history of the country--certainly a new era for liberty--but what will be changed?" Lincoln had called at the telegraph office as usual that morning. "He was entirely calm and made no reference to the act which since has been surrounded by artists of the pen and brush by such a halo," <sup>Rosewater</sup> ~~he~~ subsequently wrote. In previous conversations, he had heard the president "allude repeatedly, in a rather humorous vein, to that forthcoming proclamation which, in his opinion appeared to be something of a Pope's bull ~~again~~ against the comet." At that time, few viewed the proceeding as of great importance and its immediate practical ~~in~~ value looked dubious since it promised freedom only to slaves in territory not held by Union forces. Its publication in the Washington Star created no particular sensation or demonstration so far as he could observe.

On the same day, the young operator attended the president's New Year reception. "At 11 o'clock, I went out--considerable bustle on the streets but not half as much as Christmas day. The great feature was the president's levee. Officers of the Army, under General Halleck, met at the War Department, Navy officers at the Navy Department. Army officers dressed up considerably, some Captains and Lieutenants having epaulets, swords and ~~fix~~ cocked hats, while Major Generals had plain shoulder strap. Navy officers, who are better looking body, invariably displayed full gala dress, cocked

hats, epaulets, swords and fine uniforms. Both Navy and Army officers passed enclosure to the White House while a large crowd massed outside the gates. ~~At~~ At the moment these officers entered, the Foreign Ministers, Diplomats and Cabinet Officers were leaving in handsome carriages with strikingly dressed coachmen. The Ministers were in full regalia of the court of their <sup>respective</sup> nations. Soon, the Army and Navy officers filed out. Among these, I noticed Rear Admiral Foote. Then the gates were opened for the civilians. At 1 P. M., I attempted to go in myself. The crowd was large, and old ladies, young ladies, babies, children, soldiers and citizens all mixed and jammed, kept off by a squad of soldiers with bayonets. The metropolitan police were inside the house. I got in. The President looked rather cheerful, his whiskers cut to within an inch of his face, stood in the center of the room and shook hands with every one. He remarked to me, 'How do you do, Sir?'--to a lady going by before me, 'How's the baby?' I did not see Mrs. Lincoln, perhaps on account of her being in mourning. The East Room carpet was covered up." Inasmuch as the day had been set apart for issuing the emancipation proclamation, the absence of all persons of color struck him as "rather singular" and as further proof that no one in or out of official circles gave the matter passing notice.

By mere accident, probably, our young <sup>Roosevelt</sup> telegraph operator had found comfortable living quarters in a private home, that of a Mrs. Kearons, where he was treated as one of the family, especially during recurrence of his malarial ailment which overtook him two or three times. What little leisure the arduous