

Alice North Towne Lincoln  
Boston's Selfless Advocate for the Poor



William A. McEvoy Jr.

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William A. McEvoy Jr,

Dedicated to my wife, Lucille McEvoy

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Cover: Heroic Personalities, Louis Albert Banks, D.D., 1898, p. 116

## Preface

I learned of Alice N. Lincoln's tireless work on behalf of Boston's poor while performing my research of Rainsford Island, located in Boston Harbor. She was a remarkable person and a tireless effective advocate in any cause that she undertook.

Mrs. Lincoln was educated in Philadelphia at Mary Anna Longstreth's School and Agnes Irwin's School. Later in life, she continued her education in Boston by attending the School for Social Workers.<sup>1</sup>

During the late 1800s the people who lived in the squalor of the tenements, or the hellish institutions, where many were confined, were often spoken of as "**The Unfortunates**". That term may have eased the public's consciousness as it implied their suffering was predetermined by fate. The poor and the sick were relegated to live a life of misery. The public was not shocked by early death of adults, as well as the children. Mrs. Lincoln did not accept that. Mrs. Lincoln began her life's work at the age of twenty-two.

At age fifty-eight, as a result of her many years of advocating on behalf of the poor, her health failed. Her ability to fight for her causes was extinguished by Boston's political system. Mrs. Lincoln had many successes, paid with her with self-sacrifice.

Mrs. Lincoln's obituary, in March 1926, noted that she had been an invalid for the past 15 years<sup>2</sup>. When you finish this book, you will be amazed at all she accomplished. No doubt it had a negative impact on her health.

I am a better person for having learned about Alice North Towne Lincoln.

Before moving on to Chapter 1, the following notes Mrs. Lincoln's passion, in her own words, revealing the depth of her convictions:

### **Individualism in Charity.**

**By Alice N. Lincoln.**

**Read before the State Federation of Women's Clubs, April 11th, 1895.**

*"The subject to be considered by the meeting which is held today, is charity. In the time which falls to my share, I wish to speak of charity as offered by the individual to the individual.*

*The great and good F. W. Robertson, in giving a list of rules for his own life, set it down as one of his duties that he should learn "to take a deep interest in the difficulties of others.*

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<sup>1</sup> Who's Who in New England, Edited by Albert Nelson Marquis, 1916, p. 670

<sup>2</sup> Boston Post, March 18, 1926

*It seems to me almost as if he might have made this the text of a sermon upon charity, so admirably does it express the sense of personal relationship which ought to lie at the bottom of all charity given and received. It applies especially to the form of charity which I intend to consider, for it pre-supposes an interest in the individual, and it is for this deep personal interest in the lot of our fellow-beings that I wish to enter a plea to-day. One cannot imagine sharing the difficulties of another, unless those difficulties are to a certain degree understood both by the helper and the helped. The very sense of mutual confidence thus engendered, leads to trust on the one side, and interest on the other.*

*In no relation of life is this more keenly felt than in the one with which I personally am familiar, namely, —that of landlord and tenant. Unless there is a sense of responsibility on the part of the landlord, and an intention to do right on the part of the tenant, the best elements of success are lacking to the work, and it is largely because we deal with the tenant as an individual, that it seems to me that the better housing of the poor is one very practical way of taking an interest in the difficulties of others. Poor people care very much to have healthful and respectable surroundings, and one of their difficulties is that these are not always attainable.*

*They wish, as much as their richer neighbors, to see their sons and daughters growing up with the advantages afforded by health, reasonable comfort, and good environment. To encourage this desire for improvement, the individual land lord ought to feel the responsibility of his individual tenants, and to see that good light, good air, and, so far as possible, good neighbors, are ensured to all. But it is not my purpose to speak especially of tenement-house work. I mention it merely in passing, because it is individual work to a very large degree. No two tenants are ever alike, and the difficulties of one are seldom the difficulties of another: hence the questions which arise between landlord and tenant are almost always those which concern individuals, and must be dealt with as such.*

*My intention is to refer to a far larger and more distinctly charitable field, and to try to show that the tendency of the age is to consider more and more the individual.*

*It has come to be recognized that starting even with early infancy, children do better if they are placed in homes beginning with a little "h," rather than in institutions. That not only do they thrive better physically, but that they become more normal men and women, if this plan is pursued.*

*Hence the boarding-out system has been adopted in Australia, in Germany, in England, and in our own country, with marked success. I found in visiting the largest orphanage of Berlin, that there they prefer to place all healthy female children in families, although boys are usually retained in the institution for the sake of learning trades in connection with their schooling.*

*The whole method of dealing with criminals along reformatory lines, starts with the idea that the criminal is an individual, not a member of a class. To study his position, and to understand*

*his difficulties, is now recognized as one of the duties of a superintendent of a reformatory; and the more closely all prisons are conducted on this principle, the more hope there will be of diminishing the numbers of those who live by vice and crime.*

*I have long contended that paupers should be classified, instead of being treated as if they were all equally to blame for their condition. In my own experience I have known many different sorts and conditions of men who were driven to seek the refuge of the almshouse. Some, like an unfortunate blind man now ending his days at Long Island, are the victims of misfortune or accident, and are entitled to every care and consideration which such misfortune would suggest ; others are but too clearly paying in an old age of sorrow and dependence the penalty of their idle and dissolute lives,—but unless we consider these people as individuals, and strive to relieve their individual necessities, how can we hope to deal wisely with their present needs, or to learn from them how to prevent the recurrence of similar needs in the new generation just growing up, and which we should use every effort to save from the evils of pauperism?*

*I hardly dare, in the presence of one of the founders of the Associated Charities, to say a word concerning its methods; but one great secret of the success of its friendly visitors is, it seems to me, that they deal with each case individually, and consider the individual needs of the family or person to whom they are sent. In no better way could they take a deep interest in the difficulties of others.*

*And this leads me to say in the ten minutes allotted to me, and which I know are rapidly nearing their close, that there is one danger from which we all of us need to pray that we may be delivered. It is a vice engendered by the absence of all effort to treat people as individuals, and is to be found in all classes of the community, and especially in all institutions. I refer to the vice of "officialism."*

*I think some of us have a pretty clear idea of what that means, even though the word is not to be found in the dictionary. We are all of us in danger of falling into it, when for a time we are clothed with a little brief authority; and it should be our daily aim to remember that there are really no such things as "classes" in the world; that it is made up of individuals, and that its progress is largely dependent upon individual work. I shall have occasion to refer to this in closing, but I cannot leave the subject of officialism without begging you all to fight it wherever it may be found. It has nothing to do with law and order—those we all believe in.*

*It might be described as duty performed in a perfunctory manner, and not from the highest conception of duty, as the fulfilment of God's law.*

*I think my first introduction to officialism was when I took an old woman to the poorhouse, and the matron, seeing two figures standing in the doorway, glanced at us carelessly, and said, "What, are there two of them?" Yes, there were two, one a poor unhappy woman, reduced to seek*

*the refuge of the almshouse in her last extremity, the other a woman resolved from that day to proclaim the wrongs and abuses which such innocent sufferers as her companion are compelled to endure under the regime of indifferent officials. It is for ourselves, and for our own actions that we are judged; we are not simply "two of them," here or hereafter; and we ought to be willing to accord to our fellow-beings that intelligent consideration as individuals which we claim for ourselves. In no other way can we comprehend their difficulties.*

*There is just one more point on which I must touch before I close. It is on the value of individual work in helping forward the progress of the world. It is not often by masses, and certainly not by classes, that reforms are inaugurated.*

*Luther demanding boldly the Reformation; John Howard and Elizabeth Fry, contending for the humane treatment of prisoners; Florence Nightingale ministering to the sick; Mrs. Stowe daring to denounce the sin of slavery; Lord Shaftesbury seeking to redress every wrong which he encountered; and in our own day and hour, Dr. Parkhurst, exposing the wickedness of corruption in high places; are not these all single figures which stand out pre-eminently to plead for individual work on behalf of humanity? Nay, can we not in all reverence go back even further, and turn with humble hearts to the founder of the Christian Religion, acknowledging that it was not by many, but by one, that its lessons of faith, and tolerance, and love, were first given to the world; and that these lessons were first learned by a few disciples?*

*It is not by any general principles that charity can be taught. It is by that love of man for men, which, as our own Bishop Brooks has told us, "is fast becoming a passion of the human race".*

*For such true charity may all who are present here this afternoon both work and pray!"*<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Lend A Hand, a Record of Progress, Edward E. Hale. D.D., Vol. XIV, January-June, 1895, pp. 411-414

## Mrs. Lincoln's Positive Nurturing Influences

Alice North Towne Lincoln was born on November 13, 1853 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She married Roland Crocker Lincoln on November 3, 1880. They were married, at the Trinity Church, Boston, by Reverend Phillips Brooks.<sup>4</sup> Mrs. Lincoln died on March 17, 1926, at her home, Stoneleigh, 334 South Street, Forrest Hills, Boston.<sup>5</sup> Roland followed her in death on April 7, 1926, at Stoneleigh.<sup>6</sup>

Mrs. Lincoln was a descendant of William Towne (b. 1599 England – d. 1673 Topsfield, MA.)

William Towne arrived in the Colony between 1634 & 1639. He had three daughters who, in 1692, were accused of practicing witchcraft in Salem: Rebecca Towne Nurse, age 71, mother of eight children, and Mary Towne Estey, age 58, mother of nine children were executed. Sarah Towne Bridges Cloyes, age 52, mother of thirteen children, was interrogated, imprisoned, and then released. She moved to Framingham, MA.<sup>7</sup>

Roland Lincoln was a descendant of Samuel Lincoln who arrived from England on April 8, 1637, and settled in Hingham, MA.<sup>8</sup> Prior to their marriage, Roland and Alice were members of the Boston Society of Decorative Arts<sup>9</sup>

**Father:** John Henry Towne (b. February 29, 1818- d. April 6, 1875)

His fortune was first made in the business of engineering and construction with the establishment of Merrick & Towne. In 1848 he was engaged in erecting the gas works at New Bedford and Savannah. Prior to the Civil War he entered the firm he headed up J. P. Morris, Towne & Co. of Philadelphia. The business made the largest engines for war vessels, monitors, and other machinery. When the Civil War began, he offered his gratuitous services in any capacity where he could be useful.<sup>10</sup>

He inherited his love of fine arts, music and food, from his father John Towne (b. April 30, 1787 - d. July 25, 1851). After the War he was member of the Franklin Institute Philosophic Society. His passion was in the reconstruction and advancement of the University of Pennsylvania.

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<sup>4</sup> City of Boston, Records of Marriages, 1880

<sup>5</sup> Certificate of Death, City of Boston, No. 2692

<sup>6</sup> Certificate of Death, City of Boston, No. 3729

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.americanfamilyhistory.com/Towne%20Family/Towne>

<sup>8</sup> Colonial Families of the United States, Vol III, p 294

<sup>9</sup> The Art Journal 1880, p 191

<sup>10</sup> The Descendants of William Towne, P 179-180, 518, Edwin Eugene Towne 1901.

*“John Henry Towne was a wealthy Philadelphia businessman, and a much-respected philanthropist. On 1867, he purchased 25 acres at “Eagle Head” Manchester, MA, where he eventually built his summer home. He also acquired considerable acreage in the Kettle Cove area.*

*When Mr. Towne died in 1875, his will provided that 85 acres of the Kettle Cove property be given to the University of Pennsylvania. That land was indicated on the map as the Pennsylvania Institute Property. The University then created a subdivision plan and began selling-off the lots, most of them between 1884 and 1900. The last lots were sold in the mid-1920’s, all of which resulted in a tidy windfall for U Penn. So now you know why this part of town was known as the University Lane area.*

*Towne had attended the University of Pennsylvania for just one year, but as was obvious, was a significant benefactor. Not surprisingly the University recognized his generosity with an honorary degree.*

*Two final observations about the Towne family. John Henry’s sister, Ann Sophia Towne Darrah, attained considerable notoriety herself, as an outstanding landscape artist. Upon her death in 1872, the MFA held a retrospective exhibit of her work, with 262 of her paintings on display. We are grateful to have several of her oils in our collection at the Trask House.*

*Finally, there was John Henry Towne’s daughter Alice. In 1878 she was instrumental in raising money to buy much of the woodland along Old School Street in Manchester and Southern Avenue in Essex, including what was known as “Cathedral Pines”. This land was now an important part of the Manchester-Essex Conservation Trust.”<sup>11</sup>*

John Henry Towne died at Paris April 6, 1875, accompanied by his wife and daughter. Alice and her brother Henry, and mother returned to Boston On May 18, 1875. They were probably returning with John Henry Towne’s body.<sup>12</sup> His estate provided for his family, as well as leaving handsome bequests to his brother and sisters. The remainder of his fortune was bestowed on the University of Pennsylvania.<sup>13</sup> The residue was \$1,000,000.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> [manchesterhistoricalmuseum.org/whats-in-a-name/](http://manchesterhistoricalmuseum.org/whats-in-a-name/)

<sup>12</sup> Ancestry.com, Passenger manifest, US Baltic, May 18, 1875,

<sup>13</sup> The Descendants of William Towne, Who Came to America on or About 1630 and Settled in Salem, Mass. Compiled by Edwin Eugene Towne 1901, pp. 179-180

<sup>14</sup> Steubenville Daily Herald, June 2, 1875, p. 1

**Mother:** Maria Rebecca Tevis (b. December 25, 1822 – d. September 12, 1892)

Maria was the daughter of Joshua Tevis and Rebecca Risteau Carnan. She was active in many of Boston's social causes. From 1875 to 1889, she was a Director of the New England Hospital for Women and Children in Roxbury.<sup>15</sup>

**Aunt:** Ann Sophia Towne Darrah (b. September 30, 1819 – d. December 24, 1881)

In March 1882, 136 of her water colors were sold at auction, to various persons, for \$4,189. The proceeds benefitted the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.<sup>16</sup>

**Brother:** Henry Robinson Towne (b. August 28, 1844 – d. October 15, 1924)

During the Civil War he was a mechanical draftsman, working on heavy marine engines for the monitors and other war vessels at the Boston and Portsmouth Navy Yards. In 1866 he made an extensive tour through England, Belgium, and France.

In 1868, with John Henry Towne, putting up 60% of the capital, Henry entered into a partnership with Linus Yale Jr. who had invented the Yale lock. The company was incorporated as the Yale Lock Manufacturing Company.<sup>17</sup> When Yale died in December 1868, Henry became president and the following year acquired the remaining interest from the family estate.<sup>18</sup>

Henry left a bequest of \$3,000,000 to the Museum of the Peaceful Arts in Manhattan.<sup>19</sup>

The grand concept of George Frederick Kunz (d. 1856 – d. 1932), the president of the Association for the Establishment and Maintenance for the People in the City of New York of Museums of the Peaceful Arts failed by 1930, due to a lack of funding. Kunz had imagined twenty new museums devoted to various categories of industry and learning (for example: aviation, agriculture, health and hygiene, and architecture). I found the history of the movement interesting-see footnote:<sup>20</sup>

**Sister:** Helen Carnan Towne Jenks (b. July 9, 1848 – d. September 3, 1926)

On June 15, 1874, Helen married Dr. William Furness Jenks (b. May 21, 1842 – d. October 31, 1881). He was an Obstetrician and contracted tuberculosis early in his career. From his obituary:

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<sup>15</sup> Boston Post, September 20, 1907, p. 7

<sup>16</sup> Boston Post, March 2, 1882, p. 4

<sup>17</sup> American Inventors, Entrepreneurs, and Business Visionaries, by Charles W. Carey, 2002, p.382

<sup>18</sup> The Descendants of William Towne, Who Came to America on or About 1630 and Settled in Salem, Mass. Compiled by Edwin Eugene Towne 1901, p. 267

<sup>19</sup> Julius Rosenwald: The Man Who Built Sears, Roebuck and Advanced the Cause of Black Education in the American South, By Peter M. Ascoli, 2006, p. 267

<sup>20</sup> <https://si-siris.blogspot.com/2011/10/museums-of-peaceful-arts-timeless-dream.html>

*“...Dr. Jenks married the daughter of John H. Towne, who is widely known as the generous founder of the Towne Scientific School of the University of Pennsylvania. Two children resulted from this union both of whom are still living at Jenkinstown, near Philadelphia, where their father died.*

*Thus, ended in seclusion and comparative inactivity a life at one time so full of promise that all the rewards and honors of the profession seemed in immediate prospect. After years of toil and faithful preparation Dr. Jenks in the midst of success was compelled to relinquish every hope summoned to lay down his life work ere it was scarcely begun. Truly says the philosopher: “All through the life of a pure minded but feeble bodied man his path is lined with memory’s grave stones which mark the spots where noble enterprises perished for lack of physical vigor to embody them in deeds...”<sup>21</sup>*

The following was written in 2013, in preparation of the 130<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of a tuberculosis cottage at Saranac Lake.

*...The cost of constructing the cottage, \$350, was donated by a “Mrs. Jenks, a lady in Philadelphia,” ...*

*...Helen Carnan Jenks (nee Helen Carnan Towne), Little Red’s original patron, was the widow of a promising obstetrician and gynecologist, William Furness Jenks, who had succumbed to tuberculosis in 1881 at age 39. A graduate of Harvard and the University of Pennsylvania’s Department of Medicine, Dr. Jenks had served as editor of the American supplement to the Obstetrical Journal of Great Britain and Ireland (also published by Mr. Lea) before illness forced him to abandon his career.*

*Mrs. Jenks was also the daughter of one of Philadelphia’s most distinguished citizens, John Henry Towne, whose bequest of half a million dollars had led to the establishment of the University of Pennsylvania’s Towne Scientific School, now part of the university’s School of Engineering and Applied Science, in 1875.*

*Like her father, Mrs. Jenks was active in several charitable causes, and she was a well-known health crusader at the end of the 19th century. Having learned about England’s district nurses service from a friend, she founded the Visiting Nurse Society of Philadelphia in 1886, enlisting the assistance of physicians who gave the fledgling organization needed credibility within the medical community. The organization, which served more than 300 patients by the end of its first year, still exists today as the Visiting Nurses Association of Greater Philadelphia ... For many years, Little Red was also routinely referred to as the Jenks Cottage in recognition of the generosity of Mrs. Jenks.”<sup>22</sup>*

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<sup>21</sup> The Report of the Secretary, By Harvard College (1780- ). 1881, Class of 1863, p. 58

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.adirondackdailyenterprise.com/opinion/guest-commentary/2013/09/little-red-then-and-now/>

## Mrs. Lincoln Begins her Life of Advocacy

In early February 1903, Mrs. Lincoln was interviewed by the Boston Sunday Post at her Manchester, MA home. The article was on the front page, above the fold. The final chapter of this book notes the severe repercussions following that article. The article also includes the only physical description that I found of Mrs. Lincoln:

*“...Not an aggressive, 20<sup>th</sup> century strong-minded woman, but a woman of the old school, who, by her wonderful personality, and long-headed advice, wins people to her cause...*

*...Mrs. Lincoln has brown eyes that look at one straight as though probing for truth. There are changing lights in them, too, which bespeak moods, though she would impress one as a person of even temperament. There is a natural dignity in her bearing, which inspires respect and admiration.”<sup>23</sup>*

The article’s byline was “**The Post Woman**” (it was common for newspaper women not be credited for their work). It noted:

In 1875, Mrs. Lincoln accompanied her parents on a tour of Europe. She observed the “model dwellings housing” that had been built to replace the tenements at Berlin and Birmingham, England.<sup>24</sup>

That experience may have led her to activism in tenement reform. Her first project is described in the following:

*“In 1879 Mrs. Alice N. Lincoln and a young lady friend were so wrought upon by the filth and misery which they saw in certain tenement houses visited by them, in connection with the Associated Charities, that they determined to do something to better the condition of these poor people. They hired a large house on the corner of Chardon and Merrimac Streets. It contained twenty-seven tenements, and the rent agreed upon with the owner was one thousand dollars a year, though since the first year they have paid twelve hundred. The house had the worst possible reputation morally, and had been under the ban of the police for a long time.*

*It was, at the time they took it, half empty, because of the degraded character of the occupants. Its entries and corridors were blackened with smoke, and dingy and uninviting. The sinks were in dark corners, and were foul and disease-breeding. The stairways were innocent of water or broom, and throughout the entire house, from top to bottom, ceilings, walls stair ways — everything was dirty and neglected. It was surely not an attractive task to attempt to bring cleanliness and order out of such chaos, but these resolute young reformers deliberately set themselves to perform the seemingly impossible. The interior was painted, improved means of*

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<sup>23</sup> Boston Sunday Post, July 5, 1903, p. 1

<sup>24</sup> Boston Globe, March 18, 1926, p. A25

*lighting and ventilating the sinks were ordered, and wood and coal closets arranged for each tenement on its own landing.*

*Previously the tenants had to keep their fuel in the cellar. The mouldy [sic] wall-paper was removed from the entries, and a fresh surface of plastering was put on. A few of the worst tenants had to be removed, but the majority, pleased with the new administration of things, were willing to accept its rules and remain. Tenants were soon found for every room; and this house, which had been regarded as very unhealthy, and had been a regular hive for fevers under the old regime of carelessness and greed, that did not care how dirty the tenants were so long as they paid their rent, under the new rule of cleanliness became so healthy that disease was almost unknown, and was, and is to this day, known by the tenants and the neighborhood generally as the " Good Luck House." The ladies collected their own rents, and kept everything well under their own supervision. A close account was kept of all receipts and expenditures, and at the end of the first year the balance of cash in hand was \$111.67, or more than eleven per cent on the investment. The second year it was still more profitable, the net sum at the end of the year being \$157.47.*



*The "Good Luck" Tenement House.*

*Mrs. Lincoln still carries on the administration of the "Good Luck House," and no queen was ever treated with more genuine respect than she is there. She is regarded as a most practical sort of patron saint to the institution. Yet there is no element of charity suggested in her dealings with her tenants. It is simply Christian justice. She seeks with great care to help them retain their self-respect, and treats them as fully her equal in personal responsibility. The rent is required to be paid regularly. One rigid rule enforced upon all tenants is cleanliness. She pays for the weekly scrubbing of the halls and stairways, but the tenants are required to sweep them every day, in turn. The sinks and drains are kept clean. All this has a marvellous [sic] effect on the home habits of the inmates; and I have seen as clean and tidy rooms in the "Good Luck" tenement house as I have seen anywhere, and that, too, on days when they were caught unawares, it not being the regular rent day, when they expect the landlady. All above six per cent has been put in the bank as an*

*emergency fund, and, from time to time, the tenants have been permitted to share some unexpected pleasure from this. Once a splendid entertainment was given the tenants, in a public hall, with stereopticon views; at another time, it took a more material method of expression, and a good blanket, a pitcher and basin for each family, came out of this fund. In every way the tenants are made to know that their interests are in perfect harmony with those of the landlady. To encourage them to use more room, where they are able to pay for it, a discount is made on each additional room taken, and ten cents a week is deducted for payment in advance. A majority of them avail themselves of this privilege.*

*If he who makes a tree to grow where none grew before, is a public benefactor, surely, she who has made it possible for many family-trees to grow and thrive, yielding their fragrance and their fruit in a pure home and social life, is a benefactress in the highest sense.*

*Let us encourage on every side the transformation of filthy, neglected tenements into "Good Luck" houses.*

*A little wise thoughtfulness may vastly improve the childhood of the slums. Boys' clubs and girls' clubs are steps in the right direction. They awaken an interest in innocent games, afford a glimpse of beautiful pictures, and give zest to the intellectual appetite for fresh, wholesome books. The "sand garden" is also a happy thought. Think of thousands of children reared in the narrowest, filthiest quarters, who have never had a chance to make even a mud-pie out in the pure air of heaven. It may seem a small thing to some, but it is a tragedy to me. When I remember my own happy childhood over in the Oregon woods, where I ran as free and untrammelled as a young*



*The Sand Garden*

*colt in the pasture, and made mud-pies beside the brook that had its home in a great bubbling spring on the hillside, breathing the air fragrant with the perfume of wild lilies, while robins and bobolinks and meadow larks sported and sang without fear, on every side — when I contrast a childhood like that with the child-life in the Boston slums, I am heart-broken. There is nothing so sad as this "murder of the innocents" that is going on in all our great cities.*

*Marianne Farningham sings their dirge: —*

*“Such sights there are in the great sin-soiled city, as might compel an angel into pity;  
But none sadder in all the world of care, than a young child driven to black despair!”*

*Surely, trumpet blast never called men and women to a holier crusade than this rescue of  
the lost childhood of the slums.”*<sup>25</sup>

Reverend Banks also noted Mrs. Lincoln in his book, **Heroic Personalities, Louis Albert Banks, D.D.** Mrs. Lincoln was one of forty people noted in the book, including, Helen Keller, Mary A. Livermore, Booker T. Washington, Julia Ward Howe, Clara Barton, Maud Ballington Booth, and Mary A. Bickerdyke.

The concept of earning a return on a philanthropic investment began in London. In 1863, Sir Sidney Waterlow, founded the Improved Dwellings Company, Ltd of London. It was a private philanthropic enterprise. He considered charity “false philanthropy” inimical to the self-respect of the poor man, he conducted his tenements on a business basis.<sup>26</sup> Boston was to adopt that model.

With the approval of the Commonwealth’s Legislature, The Boston Cooperative Building Company (BCBC) was formed on May 25, 1871. William Gray, Abby May, Henry B. Rogers, were the named officers. The Articles of incorporation stated that shares were to be sold at twenty-five dollars per share. Dividends were “*not to exceed seven per cent, per annum*”.<sup>27</sup> The potential of a return on their investment may have assisted in raising capital.

By-Laws were set by the Officers and required that one-half of the Officers were to be women.<sup>28</sup>

By June 16, 1871, eight-thousand shares were sold at \$25 per share. On July 16<sup>th</sup> their first acquisition was purchased on East Canton Street.<sup>29</sup> “The Palace” on Lincoln Street was the next project to be acquired and renovated.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> White slaves, or, The oppression of the worthy poor, Rev. Louis Albert Banks, D.D., 1893, pp. 203-210

<sup>26</sup> Philanthropy and the Five Percent” Boston Cooperative Building Company and the Improved Dwellings Association 1871-1915, Jane S. Becker 1985, p. 11

<sup>27</sup> Act of Incorporation By-laws of the Boston Co-operative Building Company, May 25, 1871

<sup>28</sup> By-laws of the Boston Co-operative Building Company, as noted in the First Annual Report, 1872

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, p 3

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p 4

Alice N. Lincoln was appointed a Director of the BCBC in 1882.<sup>31</sup> She remained on the Board until at least 1897.<sup>32</sup> Mrs. Lincoln's husband, Rolland, became a Director in 1885<sup>33</sup> He also remained on the Board until at least 1897, when he was noted as the Treasurer.<sup>34</sup>

When Mrs. Lincoln was appointed as a Director, the President of the BCBC, was Martin Brimmer (b. 1829-d. 1896), a founder and the first President of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. I shall later note her interest as a patron of, and donator to, the Museum. Her Aunt, Ann Sophia Towne Darrah's involvement with the Museum is noted on page 9.

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<sup>31</sup> Boston Co-operative Building Company, as noted in the Eleventh Annual Report, 1882

<sup>32</sup> <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=wu.89072992662&view=1up&seq=372>

<sup>33</sup> Boston Co-operative Building Company, as noted in the Fourteenth Annual Report, 1885

<sup>34</sup> <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=wu.89072992662&view=1up&seq=372>

## Edith Kay

Mrs. Lincoln's will contained a bequest to Edith Kay, not to exceed \$5,000, as well as various pieces of jewelry.<sup>35</sup>

Mr. Lincoln's will provided Edith with a much larger amount of funds, paid annually, if Alice predeceased him.<sup>36</sup>

That caused me to begin a search to ascertain who Edith Kay was.

A passport for Edith Kay, noted that her birth name was Mary Ellen Kay. She was born May 4, 1885, in Boston, MA.<sup>37</sup>

Mary Ellen Kay was born in Boston, May 4, 1885. Her mother was Alma Kay, born in New Brunswick, her father was unknown.<sup>38</sup>

A Certificate of American Citizen, October 12, 1910, at Hankow, China noted Edith Kay, staying with Mrs. R. C. Lincoln, of Forest Hills, Mass. That person and address was noted as her nearest relative in the U. S. A<sup>39</sup>

A 1926 Passenger Manifest, noted Edith Kay's United States address as Mrs. R. C. Lincoln, 334 South Street, Jamaica Plain, Mass<sup>40</sup>

### **Items where her name is listed as Edith Lincoln:**

1901: Boston Sunday Post article noted: "...There with her husband, Roland Lincoln, a lawyer, and her adopted daughter, a young lady of 18, Mrs. Lincoln spends her home life in quiet, unassuming way. The little family of three enjoy the peaceful sylvan rest after the busy day in the city. .."<sup>41</sup>

1902: Boston Globe article noted: "...Mr. and Mrs. Roland C. Lincoln and Miss Edith Lincoln were passengers on the last outward trip to Saxonia."<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Essex County, MA, Probate and Family Court, file # 154605

<sup>36</sup> The Will of Roland C. Lincoln. article #4

<sup>37</sup> United States Passport, #77145, dated, October 4, 1915

<sup>38</sup> Records of Birth, City of Boston, May 4, 1885, Record # 7302

<sup>39</sup> Certificate of American Citizen, October 12, 1910 at Hankow China

<sup>40</sup> California, Passenger and Crew list, SS Golden State, October 21, 1921

<sup>41</sup> Boston Sunday Post, July 5, 1903, p. 1

<sup>42</sup> Boston Globe, July 13, 1902, p. 33

1902: Manifest, Liverpool to Boston, noted passengers, Roland C., Alice N., and Edith K. Lincoln, as passengers.<sup>43</sup>

1918: Boston Globe article noted: “Mr. and Mrs. Roland C. Lincoln of Stoneleigh, Forest Hills, and their daughter Edith Lincoln, are occupying Little Orchard, their summer home at Manchester, for the season.”<sup>44</sup>

1919: Boston Social Register noted:<sup>45</sup>

*Lincoln, Mr. & Mrs. Roland Crocker (Alice N Towne) [Ec. Un. Mfl. H'65]  
Lincoln, Miss Edith..... “Stoneleigh” Forest Hills Mass*

It is obvious that Alice and Roland, in outward appearances, claimed Edith as their daughter. However, I believe they never formally adopted her. The disparity in their bequests to Edith is interesting as Roland’s will benefitted her more than Alice’s.

### **Edith’s Missionary and Foreign Service Work**

The 1910 United States Census, recorded her as, Edith Kay, living at 35 Washington Street, Malden, MA. She is noted as a lodger and a stenographer.<sup>46</sup> That address is a few blocks away from St. Paul’s Episcopal Church. That may be where she had her training before going to China, later that year. Edith was an Episcopalian Missionary.

The National Council/Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, China Records, 1835-1951-, has 319 boxes of records (80 l.f.) It contains 14 letters from Edith Kay, written, for the periods 1910, 1913-1919. Those records are located in the Archives and Historical Collections of the Episcopal Church. 606 Rathervue Place, P. o. Box 2247, Austin, TX 78768

When Edith arrived in Hankow, China, October 10, 1910, as a missionary for the American Church Mission, Mrs. Lincoln was listed as her nearest relative.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Curnard Line, Manifest of Passengers, S.S. Saxonia, September 24, 1902

<sup>44</sup> Boston Globe, July 7, 1918, p. 50

<sup>45</sup> Boston Social Register, p. 109

<sup>46</sup> 1910 United States Census

<sup>47</sup> Certificate of Registration of American Citizen, US Consulate, October 10, 1910

Edith's, May 19, 1924, application for an Emergency Passport from the American Consular in Peking, China, noted the periods of time she spent in China:<sup>48</sup>

- October, 1910 – May, 1915
- December, 1915-October, 1921
- February, 1922- May 19, 1924

It appears that her first two stays were as a stenographer. Her third, and last stay, was a US Consulate worker.

Edith's 1924 Passport noted her as an Office Assistant for the US Government Consular Service. Again, her legal domicile was listed as Boston.<sup>49</sup> Her two previous Passports noted her a Stenographer and Bookkeeper for the American Church Mission (Episcopal).



Edith's 1924 Passport Picture



The above picture of Edith was published in January 1926, two months before Mrs. Lincoln's death. Edith was employed at the US Foreign Service Mission at Vancouver.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Application for an Emergency Passport from the American Consulate

<sup>49</sup> Ibid

<sup>50</sup> The American Foreign Service Journal, Vol. III January, 1926, No. 1, p. 18

### **Edith's post missionary/government service life:**

I was able to find Edith's post 1926 life. The name Edith Graffis was noted on the Lincolns' Probated will documents when the Lincoln Estate was closed, May 31, 1974.<sup>51</sup>

From that information I found that:

On May 25, 1932, Edith Kay, age 47, married John Leslie Graffis, age 35, at the Trinity Episcopal in Hayward, CA.<sup>52</sup> Her birth date, May 4, 1885, matches her birth record and notes Boston as her place of birth.<sup>53</sup> The name of her birth mother is the same on both documents, as well as her mother's place of birth.

Edith's husband was a widower, with a child, Ethel Jane, (b. August 21, 1931 – d. December 10, 2016). Ethel Jane is buried at the Hillcrest Park Cemetery in Medford, Oregon.

Ethel Jane's birth mother, John's first wife, was Eva Merle Denton Graffis, (b. July 18, 1903 - d. August 24, 1931) (three days after Ethel Jane's birth). She is buried at the Mount Eden Cemetery, Hayward, CA.

Edith's husband, John Leslie Graffis, (b. March 3, 1897- d. August 28, 1975) is buried at Hillcrest Park in Medford, Oregon.<sup>54</sup>

Edith Kay died September 1, 1973, and is buried<sup>55</sup> at Hillcrest Park in Medford, Oregon. She rests with her husband, John, and her step-daughter Ethel Jane.<sup>56</sup>

I performed a search to locate Edith Kay's biological's mother and believe that I located her. Various documents provide hard evidence that she married several years after Edith Kay's birth and had children. She appeared to have enjoyed a good life, dying in her 70s. I have chosen not to go any further, as it benefits no one.

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<sup>51</sup> Essex County, MA, Probate and Family Court, file # 154605

<sup>52</sup> County of Alameda, CA, Marriage License, #435, May 25, 1932

<sup>53</sup> Records of Birth, City of Boston, May 4, 1885, Record # 7302

<sup>54</sup> Findagrave.com, Memorials # 131274068

<sup>55</sup> Findagrave.com, Memorials # 131274054

## The Arts

Prior to their marriage, in 1880, Roland and Alice were members of the Boston Society of Decorative Arts.<sup>57</sup> Martin Brimmer, founder and first President of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, was also a member.<sup>58</sup> Later in the 1880s, Mr. Lincoln became the President of the Boston Society of Decorative Arts<sup>59</sup>

The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, holds thirty-four items, donated by Mrs. Lincoln. Thirty-two were lithographs created by British watercolorist, Samuel Prout (1783-1852). They are:

At Andernach, Bacharach, Boppard, Braubach, 3 copies of At Cologne, Ehrenbreitenstein, Franckfort, Godesberg, Kappelle, Katz, Lahneck, 2 copies of Leuderdorf, Libenstein and Sternfels, List of Contents, 2 copies of Mayence, Nieder Lahnstein, Ober Wesel, The Pfalz, Rentz on the Rhine, St. Clement, St. Goar and Rheinfels, St. Omar, Strasbourg, Schafausen, At Strusbourg, Titlepage and Ulm. All donated on November 14, 1896.

Mrs. Lincoln's most valuable item is "The Day Before Parting", painted, in 1862, by Józef Israels (b January 27, 1824 - d. August 12, 1911). Dimensions-102.5 x 126.0 cm (40 3/8 x 49 5/8 in.)



**The Day Before Parting**

**Photograph © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston<sup>60</sup>**

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<sup>57</sup> The Art Journal 1880, p 191

<sup>58</sup> The Art Journal 1880, p 191

<sup>59</sup> Kings Hand Book of Boston, Moses King, p. 133

<sup>60</sup> Permission granted by The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



## **La Marguerite**

### **The Louvre Museum**

Mrs. Lincoln's will noted: *"Clause 4. I give and bequeath to the Musee du Louvre of Paris, France, for the benefit of the French people, the painting by William Morris Hunt, known as "La Marguerite," but upon the express condition that it shall, upon and after acceptance and receipt thereof, always remain in the possession and ownership of said Musee. I request that said painting when hung be labeled, "Bequest of Alice N. Lincoln of Boston U. S. A. I make this gift because William Morris Hunt derived much of his inspiration from French art, and because it was the desire of Emperor Napoleon the Third that the painting should be purchased for the palace of St. Cloud.*

*In the event of the non-acceptance of said painting by said Musee or after acceptance in case of subsequent violation of the aforesaid condition of this gift, the said painting by the provision of this will, shall go to and become the property of the Metropolitan Museum of Fine Arts in the City of New York, and in such case, if and when accepted by said Museum, I request that said painting when hung be labelled "Bequest of Alice N. Lincoln."*

William Morris Hunt painted the portrait of Mrs. Lincoln's mother, which she bequeathed to her brother Henry.<sup>61</sup>

There is an interesting story relating to the William Morris Hunt painting, *La Marguerite*. Morris did two of them. The first, is the one that Mrs. Lincoln bequeathed to the Louvre. The second, is held by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. The story was told by Helen M. Knowlton (<http://www.wwhp.org/News/Newsletters/01fall.html>), in her book, **Art-Life of William Morris Hunt**, 1900.

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<sup>61</sup> Will of Alice Lincoln, Article 16, Clause 5

The following is taken from Ms. Knowlton's book:

*"...about the same time (1856) appeared the remarkably fine Marguerite, — representing a young woman with full, ripe form, exquisitely modelled. The simple white drapery enhances the beauty of neck, shoulder, and arm; while the finely poised head, with its luxuriant dark hair, bends over the delicate fingers which pull to pieces a daisy with its fate-full petals. The figure stands in a wheatfield [sic], full of air and space, and the yellow grain and red poppies are in gay and breezy contrast with the serious figure. The picture was much admired in Paris, where it was shown in the Salon of 1852, and was one of ten selected by the emperor, Louis Napoleon, for purchase. When the imperial message, ordering the picture, was sent to the studio, Hunt was absent, having left the place in charge of his brother Richard, who, believing that the picture had been engaged by an American, refused to let it go. A second message from the emperor, almost a command, met with a similar reply. When the American appeared, he was indifferent about the picture, and it was sent to Boston for exhibition. It was bought, later, by the artist's mother, for \$300, finally coming into possession of Hunt, who sold it at last to Mrs. Alice N. Lincoln of Boston for \$2500. It was greatly admired by Delacroix, who, on the strength of its merits, invited Hunt to come to his studio.*

*A replica of this picture was made by the artist after his intimate association with Millet, and shows the influence of his new surroundings. The Couture method is wholly laid aside, and the painting marks the artist's endeavor to paint solidly, and without undue attention to technique. The former work had expressed the imagination and feeling of youth, while the latter evinced the sober, mature thought of the man. It was bought by Mr. Martin Brimmer, of Boston" ....<sup>62</sup>*

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<sup>62</sup> Art-Life of William Morris Hunt, 1900, Helen M. Knowlton, pp.2 7-28

On September 19 (1907) Mrs. Alice N. Lincoln presented bronze work to the New England Hospital for Women and Children in memory of her mother. Mrs. Towne who was a Director of the hospital from 1875 to 1880. The Memorial was a beautiful bronze relief sculptured by Augustus St. Gauden's, the Angel (Amor-Caritas).<sup>63</sup> Mrs. Lincoln was named a Director in 1906.<sup>64</sup>



**Amor Caritas**  
**Augustus Saint Gaudens**

The newspaper article announcing the dedication of the statute noted that it appeared to have been a special commission, by Saint- Gaudens, for Mrs. Lincoln.

*“this was the last, personally superintended bronze, the famous sculptor's “Angel.” Others were doubtless made but the rare tinting was the mark of St. Gaudens alone, as posed by Ann Page, for the sculptor”.*<sup>65</sup>

The statue has a usually small base unlike other examples of the work. The author's attempts to locate the Memorial have been unsuccessful. Those attempts include contacting the present facility, the Dimock Community Health Center. The staff was very helpful but had no record of where it is.

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<sup>63</sup> Forty-Fifth Annual Report of the New England Hospital for Women and Children, 1907, p. 12

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>65</sup> Boston Post, September 19, 1907, p. 7

## Animal Rescue League of Boston - Paying it Forward

In 1901, Mrs. Lincoln became a member of the Animal Rescue League of Boston. The first Awarding of the Lincoln Medal for heroism was several years before the following a near tragedy.

On March 10, 1909, at 1:50 A.M., there was a large fire at the Lincoln Mansion on South Street, Forest Hills while Roland and Alice were sleeping. Their four maids were sleeping on the third floor. But for the barking of a little pet dog, Dixie, who roused the Lincolns, the fire could have resulted in the death to those in the house. Alice and Roland had only occupied the mansion since November, 1908.<sup>66</sup>

The reader can see why I added the term, *paying it forward*, as Mrs. Lincoln created the annual awards for the protection of animals several years before the fire.

The following are a few examples of the heroism that was recognized by the awarding of the Lincoln Medal:

*“The Lincoln Medals are given every year by Mrs. Alice N. Lincoln, the originator of the plan, to boys who have done the most heroic acts in rescuing animals from misery. Mrs. Lincoln presented the medals from the platform at our annual meeting this year to Maurice Spinoza and Thomas Barry. The former was on his way from Dorchester to Boston to see a street parade, but gave up his pleasure to rescue a wretched kitten he saw crawling along the road; it was pursued by boys who had been stoning it and were intent upon finishing their cruel work.”<sup>67</sup>*

*He seized the kitten, put it under his jacket, and ran with it to the house of Mrs. Wheat, in Dorchester, of whose Band of Mercy he is a bright and shining member. Mrs. Wheat reports that the boy was stoned and his blouse torn by the cruel little savages who were chasing him. It is very certain that boys who will torture helpless animals will not hesitate to ill-treat little children if they have a chance to do it.*

*Thomas Barry picked up a half frozen and miserable little dog in the street and walked a long distance with it to the League, carrying it in his arms. Honorable mention was made of Henry Madden, Edward and Whitney Draper for acts of kindness that deserve a medal had we had more medals to give.”<sup>68</sup>*

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<sup>66</sup> Boston Daily Globe, March 11, 1909, p. 10

<sup>67</sup> Animal Rescue League tenth Annual Report 1909, p. 36

<sup>68</sup> Ibid p. 37

*“We have quite a list of boys and girls who are deserving of mention on account of the humanity they have shown. Mrs. Lincoln presented the Lincoln medals to two of the boys she has chosen from our list. They were Thomas Goggan, who with a good deal of difficulty got a cat off a roof, the cat having been there three days, and Henry Simpson, who took two kittens from boys who were using them as targets on a street in Cambridge.*

*John Rake, a young boy, brought in his arms to the League a stray puppy which was just about as large as he could carry, coming all the way from Charlestown.*

*Carl Nelson brought a cat covered with mange from South Boston. Some boys were kicking it up the street when he saw it, and the poor creature had already received quite an injury from these boys.*

*Abraham Shaer, nine years old, found a cat on the street with both eyes closed with mange and brought it to the League.*

*Mention has been made in this report before of the splendid work Mrs. Herbert Wheat, of Dorchester, is doing for animals. She is president of a Band of Mercy composed of 750 boys which she has organized herself and which she constantly superintends. This, of course, accounts for the usefulness of the Band. She either brought or sent during the last year 293 cats and 52 dogs to the Animal Rescue League. In her Band of Mercy are four boys who, at her request, received prizes, the Animal Rescue League giving two medals and two books.*

*Arthur B. Corbett received the first medal. He found a wretched little dog at the end of the South Boston pier. The dog was nearly blind, was covered with mange, and had a large tumor. He walked all the way from South Boston pier to the Animal Rescue League, bringing it in his arms.*

*Joseph H. Greene received the second medal. He saw two boys who seemed to be pushing something down into an ash barrel and covering it up. He chased the boys away and found that they had a cat in the barrel which they were trying to bury there.*

*Edward Corbett, brother of Arthur Corbett, was presented with a book. He heard a cat mewing as he was passing through a field, searched until he found it lying under a bush, carried it home to his house, fed it, intending to bring it to the League, but it died that afternoon. One splendid thing that this boy and the others we are mentioning have done together is to search at Mattapan in the woods for the bird traps set there. They have found thirty or forty traps which were set for birds and for squirrels. They found two squirrels in the trap dead, and a cat with her neck torn very badly.*

*James Corbett saw a cat very badly diseased with mange and followed her for fifteen minutes until at last he succeeded in securing her on the fourth floor of a house. In order to get into the place where she had hidden, he had to get out on a fire escape, climb down on a roof, and get through a small window.*"<sup>69</sup>

*The first of the Lincoln Prize Medals, awarded by Mrs. Roland C. Lincoln, is given this year to William Austin, 27 Swallow Street, South Boston, for rescuing from some boys a cat that had had its leg cut off and was otherwise maltreated. The second medal goes to Dora Gilman 48 Kingston Street, Boston, who saw a man kick a cat out of his house into the street. She rescued it from the street and brought it in a dying condition to the League."*<sup>70</sup>

In 1902, at a fundraiser, at the Vendome, Mrs. Lincoln donated "an Erard harp, one of the first to have 7 pedals, which was Erard's invention. It was noted as very valuable and more than 100 years old. It belonged to Mrs. Lincoln's aunt, Ann Sophia Towne Darrah, noted on pages 9-10 of this book. Mrs. Darrah was fond of animals and, upon her death in 1881, all of her paintings were sold at auction for the benefit of the S. P. C. A".<sup>71</sup>

Mrs. Lincoln made a bequest, of \$200, to the Animal Rescue League.<sup>72</sup>

*"The most recent article found was the awarding of the Lincoln Medal in 1942, to Stephen O'Sullivan, of Malden, 16, and Edward A. MacNevin, 30, of Braintree. O'Sullivan rescued a cat from a third story roof and MacNevin pulled "Lucky" a white Spitz from the path of a train."*<sup>73</sup>

I checked with the Animal Rescue League and they were unaware of any recent awarding of the Lincoln Medal. I also searched for Dixie's grave at the League's cemetery in Dedham, MA and could not find a marker and the cemetery could not find a burial record.

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<sup>69</sup> Animal Rescue League Eleventh Annual Report 1910, pp. 14-15

<sup>70</sup> Animal Rescue League Eighth Annual Report 1907, p. 40

<sup>71</sup> Boston Globe, December 2, 1902, p. 5

<sup>72</sup> Will of Alice Lincoln, Clause 4, item 23.

<sup>73</sup> Boston Globe, February 4, 1942, p. 7

## Saving the Park Street Church

*“For more than ninety years the famous Park Street Church, at the corner of Tremont Street close to the gilded dome of the Massachusetts State House and only a few steps from the elms of the famous Common and the wonders of the beloved Frog Pond, has brought to mind the honored memories of ancestral Boston. The property has now been sold for \$1,250,000, and a sky-scraper office building will speedily efface every recollection of the old meeting-house in which so many sermons have been preached since the nineteenth century was in its swaddling-clothes. Like the Broadway Tabernacle in Manhattan, it must pass away. To consider practical matters of business investment, it may not be out of place to mention that the two celebrated church properties in New York and in Boston have been sold for amounts not far apart. In each instance a religious landmark of note is to give way before the almost irresistible onset of business enterprise...”<sup>74</sup>*

An eighteen-person Preservation Committee was formed on January 14, 1903,<sup>75</sup> and Mrs. Lincoln joined it applying her usual approach, both feet in. By January 15, 1903, the Committee raised \$100,000 of the anticipated \$1,250,000 needed to repurchase the church. Roland’s brother, William H. Lincoln, also became a member.<sup>76</sup> Mr. Lincoln was the President of the Boston Chamber of Commerce from 1900-1903.<sup>77</sup>

On February 27, 1903, the Committee appeared at a hearing in the State House, in an attempt to have the church made a part of the Metropolitan Park District. That effort failed.<sup>78</sup>

The quick resolution of the matter was reported in the Boston Globe, on April 3, 1903:

### **“CHURCH IS SAVED”**

*“Plan to buy the Park Street Edifice fails. —  
Syndicate gives up the Project. —  
Public Sentiment a Strong Factor. —  
Another was Business Considerations.”*

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<sup>74</sup> New York Tribune, Dec. 28, 1902, as reported in The Preservation Of Park Street Church Boston, October 1903, pp 31-32

<sup>75</sup> The Preservation Of Park Street Church Boston, October 1903, p. 34

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, p. 32

<sup>77</sup> Officers Of The Boston Chamber Of Commerce From Its Organization, Boston Chamber of Commerce, Annual Report, 1908, p. 13

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid*, p. 19

*“Park Street Church is again free from the grasp of business enterprise, and the society is at liberty to join in any patriotic movement to save the property in its present shape. The men who made the bargain with the owners of the property for a purchase have failed to pay the \$300,000 of the purchase money within the time agreed upon, and thus have forfeited all claim of any nature to the right of acquiring the property.”<sup>79</sup>*

I recommend the following link as it contains the entire history of the event. Mrs. Lincoln is mentioned many times and there are several of her speeches that are reduced to writing:

[https://www.google.com/books/edition/The\\_Preservation\\_of\\_Park\\_Street\\_Church\\_B/9gZKAAAA\\_MAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=The+Preservation+Of+Park+Street+Church+Boston,+October+1903&printsec=frontcover](https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Preservation_of_Park_Street_Church_B/9gZKAAAA_MAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=The+Preservation+Of+Park+Street+Church+Boston,+October+1903&printsec=frontcover)

The link notes information about the church’s architect Peter Banner. He died in 1835 and is buried at Mount Auburn Cemetery in an unmarked grave. His design of the steeple was in the style of Christopher Wren.

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid p. 64

# Cremation

**Paper Read by Mrs. Alice N. Lincoln, At the Annual Meeting of The New England Cremation Society, December 19, 1893**

*“It is with great diffidence that I approach the subject which we are met together to discuss this evening. I am sure there are many among the audience who have thought more deeply on this subject, or have considered more carefully the value of cremation, than I, — but there is one reason, a sacred one, which gives me the right to speak reverently of what it seems to me are its essential points, and at the same time to enter a plea for its adoption.*

*Some years ago, when the whole question of cremation was less understood, and therefore less in favor, than it is to-day, a dear relative of mine, one of the nearest and dearest there can be to any one, undertook to investigate and see for herself what were the methods of cremation employed in Philadelphia, where, as you know, a building for the purpose has been in existence for some time. The result of her investigation was that she thoroughly believed in and endorsed the methods of the Pennsylvania society, and left, at her death, a request that her remains might be disposed of in this manner, provided those nearest to her were willing that this disposition should be made.*

*Needless to say, that her wishes were complied with, and it is in the interest of a cause which she had much at heart, and in which she fully believed, that I am here to-night. It seems to me that there are two points which we need to consider in regard to cremation: First, the way it affects the minds of individuals; Second, the way in which it affects the community at large.*

*We cannot enter upon any new path, or depart from any established precedent, without shocking the minds of a great many who have become used to the old order of things. For this reason, we need to deal very tenderly and carefully with those who do not agree with us, when we are making any innovation, or departing from any fixed standard. We need to be very tolerant of feelings which have grown with the growth, and formed part of the very lives of our neighbors. To many it doubtless seems a dreadful thing, notwithstanding the self-devoted words of scripture, "though I give my body to be burned," that there should in this age, in any way, be a wholesale destruction of the human frame, a literal rendering of "ashes to ashes, dust to dust." Then, too, we have to combat the tenderest side of human affections. These mortal remains, which we would destroy, are those outward forms which in life were so dear to us. Those were the hands we pressed, the locks we smoothed, the lineaments we loved.*

*Let us then, I repeat, be very tender and patient with those who are not willing at once to consign all that is dear to the flames, instead of to the tomb. It is a different matter when we come to the other side of the question, namely, that which concerns public health.*

*Here indeed, we do not need to pause, for there can be no hesitation between the danger to health from the slow, lingering process of decay, and the absolutely sanitary conditions of cremation. Take the cases of contagious disease alone. It is well known that clothing, buried with those who have died of infectious diseases, has been the means of spreading dangerous epidemics[sic] over whole districts, when by chance or carelessness, after the lapse of years, such clothing was disinterred. A sad case of this occurred in the small village of Eyam, in Derbyshire, England, which was stricken by a sore visitation of the plague in 1666. The virulence of the disease was such that in a parish of seventy-six families, two hundred and fifty-nine persons died, and ninety-one years afterwards, in 1757, when five laboring men were digging up land near the plague-graves, and came upon what appeared to be some linen, they all sickened with typhus fever, from which three of them died, and no less than seventy persons in the parish were carried off by the same disease.*

*We cannot, perhaps, recall any instance in more modern times, when cause and effect were so distinctly discernible, and yet it must have occurred to all of us, that in cases of small-pox, cholera, scarlet fever, diphtheria, we were incurring a serious risk to others, by permitting the ordinary forms of burial.*

*I hope some of us may live to see the day when it shall be ordered by law, and sanctioned by public opinion, that the body of any person dying of a contagious disease, pronounced such by a reputable physician, shall be cremated, as a protection to society, and in pursuance of the laws of health.*

*It may be too much to expect that public opinion will sanction the annihilation of the human body in cases of death from non-contagious disease, but as a safeguard to the community, it will be a most valuable means of preventing the spread of contagion, if cremation can be universally adopted in those cases where death has occurred from contagious sickness.*

*One word as to the method itself. It was new to me, though it may be familiar to many of you. I was called upon to face it under circumstances which were sad and unusual, and it is not too much to say that I regarded it with dread.*

*To reassure those of you who may be unfamiliar with the process, it is a pleasure to me to state that after all the preparations were made, and we stood in silence watching the rosy glow which played over the white surface of the retort, a feeling came to me of awe,*

*certainly, but also of peace and rest. There was something so spiritual, so elevating, in the absolute purity of the intense heat, that it seemed to all of us who stood there, far less appalling or depressing than the blackness of an open grave, and as we slowly turned away from the scene, and left the "cleansing fires" to do their work, while there was certainly sadness in our hearts, the feeling of dread had vanished, and we were content to know that the wishes of one we loved dearly had been fulfilled, in a way that seemed fitting and appropriate.*

*I shall leave it for others, far abler than I, to show the religious side of the practice of cremation. That it has a religious side, none of us can deny, for it embodies one of the highest principles of religion, the consideration of the welfare of our fellow-men.*

*This movement, it seems to me, is intended to protect the people against a danger of which they are not fully cognizant themselves.*

*They may be slow in acknowledging it, but in time this cleanly, healthful method of disposing of the dead will be sure to commend itself to many members of the community, and precedents are not lacking, to show how greatly this system was in favor in times past.*

*To sum up briefly: —*

*I. We need to uphold the cause, because we believe it a good one, one which will benefit rich and poor alike, by tending to preserve the health of the community.*

*II. We need to be very tolerant towards those who do not agree with us, because we are contending against deeply-rooted customs and sentiments.*

*III. Most of all, we need to show those who are disposed to question the desirability of cremation, that it is a step forward, an effort in the right direction, and moreover that it is in no sense opposed to the teaching of the Christian religion.*

*When we shall have established these points, I think we can safely say that this cause, like many another which has needed to be studied in order to be understood, will be recognized and appreciated upon its own merits, and will then cease to need any support or countenance from those of us who are willing to come forward as its advocates today.”<sup>80</sup>*

Roland C. Lincoln died April 7, 1926. He was not cremated. Alice N. Lincoln died March 17, 1926. She was cremated at Mount Auburn Cemetery where they are buried.

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<sup>80</sup> Transactions of the New England Cremation Society, 1894 pp. 39-44

## Health Care Work

Mrs. Lincoln was a Director of the Home for Aged Women. It was located at 108 Revere Street, Boston.



*“HOME FOR AGED WOMEN (incor. 1849), 108 Revere Street. Apply to Chairman Committee on Admission, Andrew Cushing, Room 19, Congregational House, 9 to 11. For indigent women of American parentage, who have resided in Boston the ten years preceding application and are over 60. Admission fee, \$150; and inmates having property must secure it to the Corporation. After three months’ probation, if the inmate is dismissed or leaves voluntarily, the admission fee is refunded, after deducting \$3 a week for board. When able, each inmate assists in the work of the Home. About 90 beds. Inmates can visit their friends by permission of the Matron. Friends of inmates visit from 2 to 5, Wednesday and Saturday; the public, Wednesday afternoon.”<sup>81</sup>*

Mrs. Lincoln made a bequest in her will of \$500 to the Home for Aged Women.<sup>82</sup>

*Mrs. Lincoln was a director<sup>83</sup> of the Burnap Free Home for Aged Women, 38 Pleasant St. Upham’s Corner. Also known as Miss Burnap’s Home for Aged and Friendless Women. Provides a home for aged Protestant women.<sup>84</sup>*



<sup>81</sup> A Directory of the Charitable and Beneficent Organization of Boston, 1886, p. 17

<sup>82</sup> Will of Alice N. Lincoln, Clause 4, Item twenty-four

<sup>83</sup> Who’s who in New England: A Biographical Dictionary of Leading Living Men and Women, 1916, Edited by Albert Nelson Marquis. P. 670

<sup>84</sup> Bacon’s Directory of Boston, Edwin Monroe Bacon, George Ellis, P. 88

*The Boston Psychopathic Hospital, the first mental health hospital (as opposed to an asylum) in Massachusetts, was constructed from 1910 to 1912 as the Psychopathic Ward of Boston State Hospital.<sup>85</sup>*



**Boston Psychopathic Hospital, 74 Fernwood Road, Boston**

Mrs. Lincoln was a driving force in the creation of the hospital. In 1906, she gave testimony, speeches and filed a Bill.<sup>86</sup> See the below link to the History of the Psychopathic Hospital, Boston, Massachusetts.<sup>87</sup>



**New England Hospital for Women and Children (now the Dimock Center)**

Mrs. Lincoln was a Director of the Hospital.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> <https://www.abandonedamerica.us/boston-psychopathic-hospital>

<sup>86</sup> History of the Psychopathic Hospital, Boston, Massachusetts, By Lloyd Vernon Briggs , 1922, pp. 34, 39, 40, 42,  
<sup>87</sup>

[https://www.google.com/books/edition/History\\_of\\_the\\_Psychopathic\\_Hospital\\_Bos/lcEgAQAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=History+of+the+Psychopathic+Hospital,+Boston,+Massachusetts+By+Lloyd+Vernon+Briggs&pg=PA64&printsec=frontcover](https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_the_Psychopathic_Hospital_Bos/lcEgAQAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=History+of+the+Psychopathic+Hospital,+Boston,+Massachusetts+By+Lloyd+Vernon+Briggs&pg=PA64&printsec=frontcover)

<sup>88</sup> Boston Post, September 19, 1907, p. 7

## Hospital's History:

*“Dr. Marie Elizabeth Zakrzewska, 1896- The New England Hospital for Women and Children (NEH), founded by Dr. Marie Zakrzewska and Ednah Dow Cheney, opened in Boston on July 1, 1862. It was, for more than a century, a teaching hospital where women doctors and nurses could study and practice medicine and women could receive treatment from female doctors. It was the first hospital in Boston to offer obstetrics, gynecology, and pediatrics all in one facility. The concept grew out of Zakrzewska's close friendships with influential women in Boston. These early supporters included reformers such as Abby May, Caroline Severance and philanthropist, Lucy Goddard. Goddard served as president for the first twenty-five years until 1887. Cheney served as secretary, becoming president in 1887. She resigned in 1902. During its first ten years the NEH served primarily the immigrant population of the area. Despite the hard financial times during the Civil War, Dr. Zakrzewska and her supporters raised enough money to sustain the hospital in its early years. Throughout the nineteenth century the NEH grew steadily from ten beds and approximately \$150 in assets in 1862 to a budget of \$146,000 in 1872. Among the doctors who served the NEH were Dr. Susan Dimock and Dr. Lucy Sewall. The country's first trained nurse, Linda Richards, studied at NEH in 1873; and the first African-American nurse, Mary Eliza Mahoney, graduated in 1875. Born and nourished by separatism, the nineteenth century solution to sexual discrimination, the hospital, by the time of its centennial in 1912, was facing conflict over integration and the challenge of justifying its existence as an all-woman's hospital. This was due in part to a growing tendency among women doctors to achieve professional equality with men, manifested by the integration of the medical profession, specialization, membership in male-dominated medical societies, and affiliation at male dominated hospitals. There were continual financial troubles as well and in the 1950s, the United Community Services of Greater Boston recommended that the hospital be open to male physicians. In response to this pressure, the board of directors adopted one of its recommendations and changed the institution's official name from the New England Hospital for Women and Children to the New England Hospital, thus indicating their willingness to accept men as patients. The controversy continued through the 1950s and 1960s. Following a long battle led by Blanche Ames Ames[sic], Chair of the hospital's board of directors, the NEH closed in 1969 and reopened as an outpatient clinic. The clinic was named the Dimock Community Health Center.”<sup>89</sup>*

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<sup>89</sup> From the guide to the New England Hospital for Women and Children Records MS 339., 1792 - 1994, (Sophia Smith Collection) <https://snaccooperative.org/ark:/99166/w6614vkh>

## Mrs. Lincoln and Rainsford Island- In Her Own Words

### **“COMMENT ON, OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS, THE BOSTON PAUPERS”**

*“MRS. ALICE N. LINCOLN, who has given a large amount of time and painstaking interest to the treatment of the paupers, and who deserves more credit than anyone else for the present hopeful campaign in their behalf, writes as follows in the Boston Transcript of August 28 (1893): —*

*Those of your readers who were kind enough to follow in your columns, last winter, the articles for which you courteously made space there concerning the poor of Boston, will, I think, be interested to know what has since been done for the islands, and why so much controversy is aroused by the sermon of Dr. Banks on the paupers.*

*Early in the spring two new commissioners were appointed. It was hoped that this change in the board would bring about good results, but, in point of fact, matters remained much the same. The appropriation for a new hospital, though made months ago, was not acted upon until this week, when bids for the building were opened...*

*On August 5 I had the honor to lay before the commissioners eight requests on behalf of the inmates of the island, as follows: —”*

- 1. More occupation for the able-bodied.*
- 2. More comfortable chairs for the aged women, who are obliged to rise at 5.30 A.M., and are not allowed to lie down without permission.*
- 3. More benches out of doors for the benefit of the inmates.*
- 4. A separate room for the dying (it having been urged by both the physician and superintendent that the cries of dying patients often disturbed a whole ward for several nights).*
- 5. More privacy for women in bathing (and it will, perhaps, shock your readers, as it did the writer, that one of the commissioners affirmed and repeated that he did not consider this necessary).*
- 6. Another nurse at Long Island, where Miss O'Brian has charge of fifty-two sick women and where there is no bath-room.*
- 7. Another nurse at the Main Institution Building on Rainsford Island, where the laundry-matron has charge of forty-two sick women in addition to her other duties, and with no assistance except what is given her by inmates.*

8. *A new matron for the hospital. My reason for making this last request is that I believe the present matron to be inefficient.*

*She has had no previous hospital training to fit her for her duties, and certainly the hospital and its patients, when I last saw them, bore evidences of neglect. The beds were not clean, and the patients showed a lack of personal cleanliness and care. When I first visited the Hospital, the floors were dirty and the closets were unwashed, but there has been an improvement in those respects. I was present when dinner was served to thirty patients in one ward*

*— or, indeed, to seventy inmates of the hospital*

*— and the matron took no charge of the food, which was put before the patients in a most uninviting manner — a great contrast to the neat wooden trays which are in use at Tewksbury.*

*Moreover, I discerned a want of interest in the patients, to which the matron herself bore testimony when she said that she never washed a wound, and was engaged as a matron — not as a nurse.*

*"These, then, were the grounds upon which I asked for the appointment of another nurse or matron, and fortunately one has applied for the position entirely without my knowledge or solicitation. One of the commissioners doubted whether a trained hospital emergency nurse could be found to go to the islands; but this offer seems to set that question at rest, and it is to be hoped her application may be considered favorably.*

*I also had the honor to lay before the commissioners the report of one of my former tenants, who was an inmate of Rainsford Island a little more than a year ago.*

*"She was a young woman who went down there because of a lump in her breast, taking her baby with her. But for the baby she would have been admitted to the City Hospital; but she did not like to leave her child, and her husband, who was absent, was unable to care for it. Consequently, she became for the time an inmate of the Rainsford Island Hospital.*

*She complained first of the indignity of having to strip in the presence of others, no screen or curtain being provided as a shelter to the necessary bath, which is the first step on entrance to an institution.*

*During her stay of three weeks, she had no towel given to her, and only one clean sheet was furnished.*

*She was expected to cook all the food for her baby, and to make and clean her own bed, although she was partly incapacitated by the lump in her breast, which affected one arm.*

*“The food was very poor and unsatisfactory: and when she complained that the porridge was sour, the matron told her if she did not like it, she could leave it.*

*Worse than all, her baby fell ill on a Wednesday; she could obtain no medicine for it until Sunday (though she asked for it repeatedly), and on Monday the baby died.*

*The mother left the institution the next day. She speaks in the highest terms of the physician in charge and of the assistant, Miss McDonald, at Rainsford Island; but she says the matron never did anything for her and was not with her when the baby died; also, that the milk and other food ordered for the patients is often not received by them. And in this respect her statement is corroborated by the remarks of another woman, also my tenant, who was an inmate of Long Island when it was first opened for women several years ago. This woman told me, with bated breath, that the food was miserable — it was killing her; and, indeed, she died soon after, though I think grief hastened her end.*

*It is because I have seen these people in their own homes that I feel such sympathy for them as paupers. They have known the comfort and independence of their own surroundings, and if by reason of old age or sickness — through no fault of their own — they become paupers, they should at least be treated with due consideration and nursed with all tenderness. I am entering no plea for the lazy and idle and intemperate class who seek the refuge of an almshouse, and for whom, as Dr. Banks says, the work-house is the proper place; but I do say that old or sick people, even if paupers, are entitled to the very best care. We do not begrudge it to them in our City Hospital or our State almshouse; therefore, why is it too much to require it of the city of Boston's pauper hospitals?*

*No wonder that an attack such as has been made by Dr. Banks meets with violent opposition and denial. He is attacking institutions whose officials depend for their bread and butter on the positions which they fill. But Dr. Banks and I have no 'axe to grind,' and he is only stating the truth when he says that the pauper institutions at Rainsford Island are overcrowded (so overcrowded that nearly fifty old women sleep in a close and stifling attic, under the roof), and that the fare, especially for the old and sick, is not what it should be.”*

**The Boston Herald of August 30 began an exhaustive article, more than five columns long, by saying: —**

*“For some time, there has been an earnest and vigorous agitation going on regarding the management and condition of Boston's pauper institutions at Long and Rainsford Islands. Heretofore this agitation has been out of the sight of the general public, with the exception of a few letters which have appeared from time to time in the papers; consequently, the*

*sermon of Rev. Louis Albert Banks last Sunday on the subject came like a revelation to many.*

*The Herald had been making a thorough investigation of the charges brought, previous to Mr. Banks' utterances, and this has been continued up to the present time, in order that the people of Boston may know accurately and to the fullest the precise condition of its pauper institutions and their inmates. As a result of that investigation, it may be boldly said that the criticisms which have been made public do not give an adequate idea of the disgraceful condition in which the institutions are at present, nor the treatment which the paupers receive and under which they exist rather than live.*

*This statement is a strong one, but it can be borne out by facts which are indisputable."*

*In the course of this long article, which fully sustains all statements set forth in my discourse, the Herald reporter, commenting on the crowded condition of the buildings on Rainsford Island, says: —*

*It is in the main building at Rainsford that the greatest lack of even decent surroundings prevails, and where the condition of the inmates is the worst. Here the fault seems to lie not only with the commissioners, but with the matrons in charge, for there is no system discernible in the housekeeping arrangements whatever. The infirmary is occupied by those women who are not able to get about; and the rooms composing that part of the building are pleasant and airy of themselves, but they are spoiled by their keeping. There is no classification of inmates, and old and young are all together, as well as the vicious and the unfortunate.*

*Another classification which might be made was suggested by the presence of two women who were so unfortunate as to be afflicted in such a manner that the whole air of the room was contaminated on their account. This was through no fault of their own, and they should not be made to suffer for it; but it seems hardly fair that all the other women should be compelled to breathe the air made foul by their presence. Add to this detriment to health and decent living the bad sanitary arrangements, and the result is, indeed, open to criticism.*

*This building is so old and antiquated that it originally had no place provided inside for water-closets and bath-rooms. In putting these in they were built directly in the corners of the rooms; and these corners were then partitioned off, but for some unknown reason the partitions were not continued up to the ceilings, the result being that the closets were practically left in the room and a screen put around.*

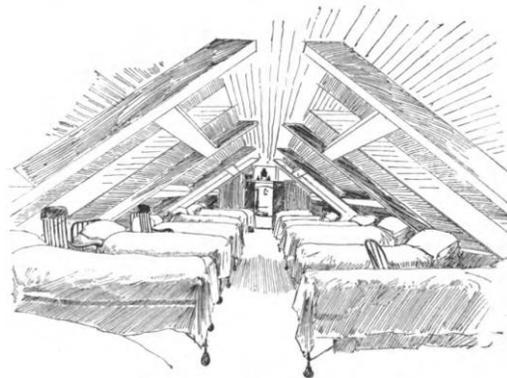
*Owing to the fact that there is no water on the island, it all being brought in tanks by steamer, there is not that abundance used in flushing out the bowls which otherwise might be the case, and which would go so far toward removing the horrible odor which is so prevalent in every part of the building. Aside from the discomfort in being obliged to smell this odor continually, the danger to the health of the inmates is a serious thing.*

*Throughout the wards in this building there is considerable overcrowding, although not to the extent that is to be seen in another part. The beds are all cared for by the women themselves, and conversation with the matron showed that there was a regular time for changing the bed linen, although that time was not the same in any two rooms, and the writer, after continued questioning and asking for explanation, failed to discover that there was any regularity whatever about it.*

*A few beds were taken at random and stripped to see their condition. Invariably the sheets were dirty, very dirty; but this was explained by one of the inmates who was in charge of this ward by the statement that it was time they were changed, according to their usual practice, but for some reason, not given, it had not been done this week. On nearly all the sheets were plainly seen the marks of dead bed-bugs and other vermin, some of it dried on and looking as though it had been there for a long time.*

*It is in the attic of the main building, however, that one should go to realize some of Dickens' pictures of pauper life, for there is a picture here that needs no exaggeration to make it appear on a par with those in fiction.*

*One cut shows one wing. Another crosses it at right angles and is partly occupied. Thirty women occupy this room, allowing about 320 cubic feet of air-space per person. The only ventilation is through windows jutting out on the roof, each one being 2 feet 10 inches by 4 feet 8 inches in size.*



*In this attic live the older women, and they pass their sleeping hours and many of their waking ones under the eaves of this old house.*

*Throughout this attic the peak is so low that it can be touched by the hand of a man of ordinary height while standing, and the roof pitches until it comes to within two feet of the floor. Under the eaves here are placed the beds of these old women, their heads close under the roof, and extending in a line down the length of the building.*

*The width of this attic is eighteen feet, and its length is that of the building; but it is divided up into several apartments. In one of these apartments were thirty beds, all occupied at night. The total air-space of this room allowed about three hundred and twenty cubic feet to each person, where a thousand are considered necessary with good ventilation, according to Mr. Commissioner Newell. The only light and ventilation that this attic gets is through a few small windows let into the roof, not large enough to furnish ventilation for rooms which are not overcrowded, and certainly not large enough to purify rooms where the air is made foul by being breathed by at least three times too many persons.*

*Moreover, these old women are required to rise every morning at 5:30 o'clock, and are compelled to remain up until 8 o'clock in the evening. They are not allowed to lie down during the day without a special permit from the doctor, as, they say, it would cause disorder. This permit he says he is always willing to grant, but they seldom come for it. This seems perfectly natural, as one hardly can expect that the old women would take pains to hunt up the doctor every time they wanted to take a short nap.*

*Not only are they not allowed to lie down for a nap without this special permit, but comfortable chairs are not furnished them. By each bed is a single ordinary wooden chair of the cheapest kind, and this is allotted to the one occupying the bed. Now and then a rocking chair may be seen, but they are few and far between.*

*Some time ago a benevolent and kindhearted lady visiting the island (**Author's note: Mrs. Alice Lincoln**) was struck with this lack of comfort, and sent to the institution a number of rocking-chairs for use in the old women's ward. They arrived on July 16, but an active search for them failed to disclose their whereabouts. It was plain that the women for whom they were intended were not getting the benefit of them, and inquiry was made. Nobody seemed to know where they were. Several believed that something of the kind had been sent down, but knew nothing more.*

*Finally, after an energetic search by Dr. Harkins, the chairs were discovered in a storehouse, or paint-shop, where they had been put when they landed on the wharf so long ago. Two days later these chairs had been taken out and placed in the wards, and there were two hundred women eager for the six comfortable rockers.*

*Another criticism which might be made is that the paupers are provided with no regular religious service. At Deer Island there is a paid chaplain, and although his duties do not call him to the almshouse, he sometimes goes over. There is a large room called the chapel, and here religious services are held when there is any one to lead them. A Catholic priest goes down twice a week to minister to the wants of the Catholics, who are in the majority; something like ninety-five per cent being of that persuasion. The fact remains, however, that the city of Boston does not give its paupers the benefit of any religious service or guidance. As was said by one lady on hearing the facts: 'In the eyes of the city it is a greater crime to be a pauper than a criminal.'*

*Rev. Dr. Frederick B. Allen, of the Episcopal City Mission of Boston, writing in the Herald on August 31, says: —*

*In the management of human beings, especially the aged, the infirm, the insane, and the sick there is needed a wise and tender consideration which sheer business management is apt to miss. The sociological problems of pauperism and crime, the study of successful methods in other cities and other lands, the deep sense of the sacredness of our humanity, even in its weakest and most unfortunate members, — these make their demand for the aid of men and women to whom these questions of human life and death are at least as controlling as the reduction of the city tax rate.*

*Were there any such board of advisers to do in our city institutions what the State Charities Aid Society has done for New York State, we should not have been confronted, as we now are, with poorly planned, inadequate, and badly managed buildings, lack of discrimination in those permitted to occupy them, insufficient and untrained nurses for the sick, lack of proper ventilation and food, and everywhere the absence of devoted personal, human, moral oversight and control.*

*I second most positively Dr. Banks' assertion that 'an advisory board of leading citizens, on which are three or four level-headed and humane women, would work the revolution that is needed in the treatment of "our brothers and sisters, the Boston paupers."<sup>90</sup>*

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<sup>90</sup> White Slaves, or, The Oppression of the Worthy Poor, Rev. Louis Albert Banks, D.D., 1893, pp. 283-301

## RAINSFORD ISLAND

### A Boston Harbor Case Study in Public Neglect and Private Activism<sup>91</sup>

McEvoy & Ray

#### Chapter 4

Portions of the following may be redundant of certain previous pages of this book. I believe it was necessary to leave intact for Mrs. Lincoln biography, in order that its context would not be lost.

*Mr. Chairman, I am here in the interest of humanity, and I hope I may be heard.*

Alice North Towne Lincoln<sup>92</sup>

*....” The State Board of Lunacy and Charity of Massachusetts took a skeptical view of Boston’s plan to place the women on Rainsford and the men on Long Island. There was some effort to improve the facilities at Rainsford to receive the women and children— “the bath rooms and closets in almshouse are in much better condition than has been case previously”—but “The buildings on Rainsford Island are in rather poor repair, the hospital being especially so.”<sup>93</sup>*

Citizen oversight of the pauper islands, such as it was, changed at this juncture as well. The new supervisors of public welfare were the Commissioners of Public Institutions for the City of Boston, and they were not uncritical of conditions on Rainsford. They wrote in their first annual report:

*“Although the hospital has been thoroughly renovated, there still remains the fact that it is entirely inadequate to the demands upon it. In previous annual reports I have made earnest appeals to remedy existing conditions, and have shown the necessity of a new hospital. It is remarkable that a building which was a small-pox hospital fifty-seven years ago, and which since then has undergone no material improvement, should up to the present time be the only hospital connected with our pauper institutions.”<sup>94</sup>*

Dr. Thomas L. Jenks, Chairman of the Commissioners of Public Institutions, approved of the exchange of women for men, however. He told the Boston Globe:

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<sup>91</sup> William A. McEvoy Jr. & Robin Hazard Ray 2019

<sup>92</sup> Documents of the City of Boston for the Year 1894, vol. 4, Document 211 (1895) [hereafter Doc 211(1895)], p. 5.

<sup>93</sup> Eleventh Annual Report of the State Board of Lunacy and Charity of Massachusetts, January 1890, Public Document No. 17, p. 67.

<sup>94</sup> Documents of the City of Boston for the Year 1894, Document 25, Report on Public Institutions, p. 159.

*“We have about 200 acres of land at Long [Island] and can there employ the paupers who are able to work at weeding and on the farm. Rainsford Island is substantially a ledge, and gives nothing for them to do. Under the old system men were at Rainsford Island, where there was nothing for them to do, but now they are at Long Island and we can use all of them who are able to work.”<sup>95</sup>*

Dr. Jenks was very used to having his way in all matters regarding the management of public institutions.

### **The Birth of an Activist:**

It is at this juncture, when the women paupers had been moved into the dilapidated hospital building at Rainsford Island that we first hear from Alice North Towne Lincoln. Because she plays a vital role in the next decade of the island’s history, it is worth finding out who she was.

Alice North Towne was born in Philadelphia into a family with deep roots in New England. Her aunt Ann (Sophia) Towne Darrah (b. 1819– d. 1881) was a successful painter of New England landscapes, and perhaps provided Mrs. Lincoln with a local foothold when she moved to Boston as a young woman. Early on, Mrs. Lincoln’s interests were directed toward social welfare and she attended “the School for Social Workers,” an institution we have not succeeded in identifying with any certainty.<sup>96</sup> She married Roland Crocker Lincoln (1843–1926), an attorney, in 1880 and lived with him at 269 Beacon Street in the Back Bay of Boston and later at “Stoneleigh” in Jamaica Plain.<sup>97</sup> The Lincolns also maintained a summer house in Manchester-by-the-Sea. They had no children, and as Mrs. Lincoln’s husband died within a month of her, no one was left to write her very interesting life story.

Mrs. Lincoln began her career as a manager for the New England Hospital for Children, and later for the Burnap Free Home for Aged Women, which was founded in 1878 for “aged, friendless, and indigent women.”<sup>98</sup> She became a director of the Boston Co-operative Building Co., which was incorporated in 1871 to “hold and improve real estate in said city (Boston), as homes for working people, at moderate cost.”<sup>99</sup> One of their efforts, begun in 1879, was to rent an entire 27-unit tenement building in Boston’s North End for \$1,000 a month. The building was notorious

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<sup>95</sup> Boston Globe, December 8, 1889, p. 6.

<sup>96</sup> S.v. “LINCOLN Alice North,” *Who’s Who in New England*, ed. Albert Nelson Marquis, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Chicago: A. N. Marquis & Co.), 1916.

<sup>97</sup> “On July 10, 1890, 269 Beacon was purchased from George Cotton by Roland Crocker Lincoln, He and his wife, Alice North (Towne) Lincoln, made it their home. They previously had lived in Manchester, where they continued to maintain a home. Roland Lincoln was an attorney in Boston. Alice Lincoln was active in public welfare issues, and served as manager of the New England Hospital for Women and Children and of the Burnap Free Home for the Aged. On November 23, 1898, he transferred the property into his wife’s name. They continued to live at 269 Beacon during the 1907-1908 winter season, but moved thereafter to Jamaica Plain.” <https://backbayhouses.org/269-beacon/>

<sup>98</sup> “Benevolent Institutions,” U.S. Bureau of the Census (Washington: USGPO, 1904), p. 234.

<sup>99</sup> <http://beatleyweb.simmons.edu/collectionguides/CharitiesCollection/CC022.html>

for its filth and its unruly immigrant inhabitants. Her fellow crusader Rev. Louis Albert Banks (1855–1933) described it in his muck-raking book *White Slaves, Or, the Oppression of the Worthy Poor*: “*Its entries and corridors were blackened with smoke, and dingy and uninviting. The sinks were in dark corners, and were foul and disease-breeding. The stairways were innocent of water and broom...*”<sup>100</sup>

Keeping careful track of expenditures and rental income, however, the partners demonstrated that a vigilant landlord could still make a profit while improving sanitation, fixing peeling paint and plumbing, and treating tenants like sentient human beings. The building became known as “Good Luck House,” every room of which was filled. She reported her findings at a general conference of the Associated Charities of Boston on November 23, 1883.<sup>101</sup> Of this project she later wrote: “*We did not attempt too much at once. We expected to improve the character of the inmates as we did that of the house, gradually. It has been my experience that tenants of this class often need only the stimulus which interest and sympathy give to enable them to do better.*”<sup>102</sup>

Animals as well as humans received the benefit of Alice Lincoln’s philanthropy. She established a medal for valor given annually by the Animal Rescue League, for people who risked their lives to save animals.<sup>103</sup> It was in a sense the repayment of a debt: in 1909, her home caught fire, and the alarm given by her dog Dixie saved the lives of Alice, Roland, and their four servants.<sup>104</sup>

Mrs. Lincoln also helped to spearhead a vital act of historic preservation when the Park Street Church (now St. Paul’s Church), built in 1809, was sold to a developer and slated for demolition. Lincoln was one of 18 outraged Boston citizens who demanded the preservation of this landmark church, from whose pulpit William Lloyd Garrison had spoken out against slavery in 1829; they raised hundreds of thousands of dollars and saved the church.

Lincoln implemented kindness in her personal life as well. She and her husband, having no children of their own, “adopted” a fatherless girl named Mary Ellen Kay. Later known as Edith K. Lincoln, she became the Lincolns’ principal heir.<sup>105</sup> Edith Lincoln went to China in 1910 to work

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<sup>100</sup> Rev. Louis Albert Banks, D. D., *White Slaves, Or, The Oppression of the Worthy Poor* (Boston: Lee and Shepard Publishers, 1892), 204.

<sup>101</sup> Alice North Lincoln, “Three Years’ Experience in Managing a Tenement-House,” *Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine*, vol. 28 (1883), pp. 145–47.

<sup>102</sup> Marcus T. Reynolds, “The Housing of the Poor in American Cities,” *Publications of the American Economic Association*, Vol. 8, nos. 2–3 (1893), pp. 65–66.

<sup>103</sup> *Boston Globe*, February 4, 1942, p. 7.

<sup>104</sup> *Boston Globe*, March 11, 1909, p. 10.

<sup>105</sup> Birth records for the City of Boston (May 4, 1885) list Mary Ellen Kay, with father unknown, mother Alma of unknown address, a native of New Brunswick. Alma Kay later married Christian P. Christiansen, a piano-maker of Boston, in 1888 (Boston Marriage Record, December 19, 1888). The Lincolns’ wills: Mass Trial Court Record Centers, File # 154605, Location NEW2, 094-004-0004-0002, Box # 153244, Essex Probate File Papers, Wills of Alice & Roland Lincoln, date November 10, 1919.

as a secretary to the bishop in the Episcopal Mission at Hankow, and remained there for many years.<sup>106</sup>

Mrs. Lincoln was an early and zealous proponent of cremation at a time when it was illegal in most states and looked upon with horror by most Americans. In 1893, she addressed the New England Cremation Society, describing a cremation she had witnessed: “We stood in silence, watching the rosy glow which played over the white surface of the retort, a feeling came over us of awe, certainly, but also of peace and rest. There was something so spiritual, so elevating, in the absolute purity of the intense heat that it seems to all of us who stood there far less appalling than the blackness of the open grave. . . .”<sup>107</sup>

Interviewed by the Boston *Sunday Post* in 1903, Lincoln was asked about her home life: “*I really have none, she said. I am quite busy—so busy that I could hardly enumerate the details of my daily life, and I have no social life.*”<sup>108</sup> Many Bostonians had reason to be grateful that she didn’t.

### **Lincoln v. Rainsford:**

In the course of Lincoln’s work with immigrant tenants, she had occasion to see some of them consigned to city institutions for indigents such as Rainsford Island and Long Island and the notorious Austin Farm in Mattapan, when they became too poor or ill to keep themselves even in low-cost housing. In 1887, one of her tenants, Margaret Mulhearn—“a worthy and tenderhearted woman” in Lincoln’s words, whose disreputable nephew stole every penny she came by—could no longer pay her rent, and Lincoln offered to take her to the Austin Farm. They went there together on August 11, and Mulhearn was taken in by a surly attendant with “not one recognition of the step that was made that day from independence to pauperism.”<sup>109</sup> When next Lincoln saw Mulhearn, she had been sent to Long Island, the Austin Farm building having closed:

*“She was very unhappy there. Her clothes had been taken by other inmates and worn before her eyes. One of my letters to her had been opened and read to the whole ward; the food was poor, the life miserable, and worst of all, she was thrown with depraved and*

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<sup>106</sup> *The American Church Almanac and Year Book* (New York: Edwin S. Gorham, 1915). In 1915, Edith came back to Boston for six months and returned to Hankow to work in the American Consulate. Except for a three-month visit home in late 1921, she remained in Hankow until 1924. When Alice and Roland died in early 1926, Edith was working at the American Consulate, where she was still employed in 1930.

<sup>107</sup> “Paper Read by Mrs. Alice N. Lincoln at the Annual Meeting of the New England Cremation Society, December 19, 1893,” *Transactions of the New England Cremation Society*, no. 2 (1894), 43.

<sup>108</sup> “A Woman Who Helps To Rule Boston: Advice of Mrs. Alice N. Lincoln Is Sought by Men High in Power: Her Notable Achievements,” *Boston Sunday Post* (July 5, 1903), p. 1.

<sup>109</sup> Doc. 211 (1895), pp. 12–13.

*degraded companions, with whom, naturally, she had nothing in common. She said the life was killing her, and it soon did.”*<sup>110</sup>

Ms. Mulhearn died in April 1889.

Mrs. Lincoln recalled that event, in a speech called “Individualism in Charity” given on April 11, 1895, to the State Federation of Women’s Clubs. The encounter with the Austin Farm attendant appears to have been the catalyst for her involvement at Rainsford and Long Island. She warned her audience of a vice she called “officialism”:

*“I think some of us have a pretty clear idea of what that means, even though the word is not to be found in the dictionary. We are all of us in danger of falling into it, when for a time we are clothed with a little brief authority; and it should be our daily aim to remember that there are really no such things as classes in the world; that it is made up of individuals, and that its progress is largely dependent upon individual work. . . . I cannot leave the subject of officialism without begging you all to fight it wherever it may be found. It has nothing to do with law and order—those we all believe in. It might be described as duty performed in a perfunctory manner, and not from the highest conception of duty as the fulfilment of God's law.*

*I think my first introduction to officialism was when I took an old woman to the poorhouse, and the matron, seeing two figures standing in the doorway, glanced at us carelessly, and said, “What, are there two of them?” Yes, there were two, one a poor unhappy woman, reduced to seek the refuge of the almshouse in her last extremity, the other a woman resolved from that day to proclaim the wrongs and abuses which such innocent sufferers as her companion are compelled to endure under the regime of indifferent officials. It is for ourselves and for our own actions that we are judged; we are not simply “two of them” here or hereafter; and we ought to be willing to accord to our fellow-beings that intelligent consideration as individuals which we claim for ourselves. In no other way can we comprehend their difficulties.”*<sup>111</sup>

In 1887, another of Lincoln’s tenants, Mary Abbott, was afflicted by breast cancer and needed hospital care. Lincoln took her to Boston City Hospital, but they would not take her because she had an infant with her. Instead, she and the child were sent to Rainsford Island Hospital. Abbott soon communicated to Lincoln the miserable conditions on the island and their lethal consequences.

As Mrs. Lincoln later testified:

*“[Mary Abbott] complained first of having to strip in the presence of others, no screen or curtain being provided as a shelter when the bath, which is the first step in the entrance to*

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<sup>110</sup> Doc. 211 (1895), p. 13.

<sup>111</sup> Alice N. Lincoln, “Individualism in Charity,” in *Lend A Hand: A Record of Progress*, ed. Edward E. Hale, vol. 14 (1895), p. 414.

*an institution, was taken, and that during her stay of three weeks she had no towel given her and only one clean sheet was furnished her. She was expected to cook all her own food and all the food, for her baby, and to make and clean her own bed, although she was partly incapacitated by the lump in her breast, which affected one arm. . Her baby fell ill on a Wednesday, and she could obtain no medicine for it until Sunday, although she asked for it repeatedly, and on Monday the baby died.*"<sup>112</sup>

Mrs. Lincoln came out to have a look for herself. She was horrified.

In addition to the crowding, the evidence of bedbugs, and the miserable food, Lincoln found that the patients, mostly elderly and ill, were required to get out of bed at 5:30 a.m., after which they had only hard chairs to sit on—"chairs without any rest for the head." She "thought it was a hardship for them to be obliged to sit in those chairs." The patients were not allowed to lie down during the day without permission.<sup>113</sup> Mrs. Lincoln made her first appeals to the Commissioners of Public Institutions in 1890, citing the issue of chairs as well as woeful hygiene, food quality, and fire safety.

A *Globe* reporter, possibly alerted by Lincoln, visited Rainsford in September 1890, and called it "*a disgrace to the city of Boston*": "[*The hospital*] building would be condemned as a place to keep pigs. The rooms are small, low-studded [*i.e., low-ceilinged*] and as a consequence badly ventilated." In the garret, built to dry clothes but now put to use as a sick ward, "29 women were penned like a lot of cattle . . . The flies were frightfully thick but no preventative is known."<sup>114</sup> Despite this bad publicity, nothing changed.

It would later become evident that the chief obstacle to progress was Dr. Jenks, the chairman of the Commissioners of Public Institutions. His work was supposed to be supported by three board members, but in practice he rarely consulted them; if he did, he bullied the elderly member, Dr. Riley, into compliance, while the other two—Mr. Prescott and Mr. LaBorde—remained powerless. The chairman was wont to speak with "much emphasis," probably a euphemism yelling and cursing.<sup>115</sup> Prescott later testified that as a board member "[He] soon learned that unless the chairman of the board favored a measure it was useless to bring the measure to formal vote before the board and was simply putting yourself in an unpleasant position as a sort of obstructionist."<sup>116</sup> At one point, in July 1890, Jenks replaced the physician in charge of Long and Rainsford Islands without informing, much less consulting, the members of his board. The island superintendent, Mr. Galvin, complained to Prescott of the appointed physician, a Dr.

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<sup>112</sup> Doc. 211 (1895), vol. 1, p. 113.

<sup>113</sup> Doc. 211 (1895), vol. 1, p. 106.

<sup>114</sup> *Boston Globe*, September 26, 1890, 13; for the dimensions and earlier uses of the hospital spaces, see Commonwealth of Massachusetts, House of Representatives, "Resolve for Defraying Expense of protecting Rainsford Island from the ravages of the Sea," of Jan. 28, 1835, p. 8.

<sup>115</sup> Doc. 211 (1895), vol. 2, p. 1725. The career of Dr. Jenks deserves much more scrutiny than we have space for here. In addition to being chairman of Public Institutions, he was a druggist, the director of the East Boston ferries (which were accused in 1885 of defrauding the city), and president of the North End Savings Bank.

<sup>116</sup> Doc. 211 (1895), vol. 2, p. 1731.

Holmes, as “*being of intemperate habits, as an opium eater, and as having improper company in his room*”; despite such reports, “*the board didn’t do anything.*”<sup>117</sup>

In August 1891, the Boston clergy renewed its attack on the system. Reverend Banks gave a blistering sermon from the pulpit of the First Methodist Episcopal Church of Boston on the city’s public charitable institutions.

“*It is a shame and a disgrace,*” he wrote, “*that Boston, which less than five years ago could spend more than \$20,000 in feasting and wining a Hawaiian woman who visited us, spending \$4000 for flowers alone, cannot afford to furnish a little butter to spread on the bread of the helpless old women on Rainsford island who are unable to work.*”

The sermon was reprinted in the *Boston Post* on August 24, 1891.<sup>118</sup> A week later, in an article of five-columns in the *Boston Herald*, Banks made a mathematical comparison of what was spent on criminal inmates versus those housed as paupers. Expenditures for everything from subsistence and bedding to fuel and lighting were often twice as generous for criminals as for the dependent poor. The *Herald* concluded,

“*the criticisms which have been made public do not give an adequate idea of the disgraceful condition in which the institutions are at present, nor the treatment which the paupers receive and under which they exist rather than live.*”<sup>119</sup>

The Rev. Frederick B. Allen endorsed Banks’s recommendation that the advisory boards of charities start including “*three or four level-headed and humane women, [who] would work the revolution that is needed in the treatment of ‘our brothers and sisters, the Boston paupers.*”<sup>120</sup> Despite the cry from press and clergy, conditions on Rainsford and Long Islands did not improve in 1891 and 1892. The women were not even afforded better chairs, much less cleaner bedding or decent food.

In early 1893, a tragedy took place in Dover, N.H., that galvanized the Boston reformers. There an old, overcrowded insane asylum burned during a snowstorm, killing 41 inmates: “*Tongues of flame leaped about the skulls and bones of the cremated insane,*” the *Dover Enquirer* reported.<sup>121</sup> Citing the tragedy in New Hampshire, the Rev. Banks preached in Grace Church that same month:

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<sup>117</sup> Doc. 211 (1895), vol. 2, p. 1736. We believe this doctor to be William Dennison Holmes (1860–1903), a Harvard Medical School graduate who died at the River Crest Sanatorium on Long Island of “acute nephritis” at age 42. See “Return of a Death” report, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, filed May 22, 1903. River Crest was for “the treatment of drug and alcohol habitués”: Henry M. Hurd et al., *The Institutional Care of the Insane in the United States and Canada*, vol. 3 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1916), p. 276.

<sup>118</sup> “Four Thousand Paupers: Our Brothers and Sisters; The Boston Paupers, Says Dr. Banks: He Criticizes the System on Managing Public Charitable Institutions,” *Boston Post* (August 24, 1891), p. 8.

<sup>119</sup> *Boston Sunday Herald* (August 30, 1891), reprinted as “The Gold Gods of Society” in Banks, *White Slaves*, p. 291.

<sup>120</sup> *Boston Herald* (August 31, 1891), reprinted in Banks, *White Slaves*, p. 301.

<sup>121</sup> The reporting of this event, which echoed around the country, hews suspiciously to the contemporary stereotypes of the mentally ill, but the description from the local newspaper a week after the event is convincing. “Cremated; Forty

*“Because of the shameful neglect of somebody who should look after the needs of that institution, 41 lives went out in that fire. Absolutely no provision for the escape of the inmates in case of conflagration was made.*

*The only hospital upon Rainsford Island is an old building which was condemned over a quarter century ago by the city, and was pronounced as a place unfit for the housing of people in poor health.*

*The room for confinement cases is about 17 by 12 feet. In that small space tonight, there are several women suffering untold pain and misery.*

*You will not find a fire escape upon any building at Rainsford Island.*

*What should be done? The whole thing should be lifted out of politics and an advisory board of benevolent and Christian citizens should be formed who would see to it that something like justice and humanity was introduced into the treatment given these poor unfortunates, and that something that could be called business was introduced into the management of the institution for the poor and unfortunates of our city,”<sup>122</sup>*

Mrs. Lincoln decided to force the issue. She organized a drive to purchase enough rocking chairs that every inmate at the island might have one. In less than two weeks, she had a consignment of eight dozen rocking chairs delivered to the wharf. But Chairman Jenks declared that he had no authority to accept them, and furthermore that with many women confined to bed, there was no need for any more chairs. The chairs sat in a warehouse for another month as Lincoln fed the newspapers proof upon proof of the indifference and incompetence of the commissioners in charge of charitable institutions.

*“There was a lively discussion at the meeting of the Board of Aldermen yesterday over the Common Council order authorizing and requesting the commissioner of public institutions to accept a number of rocking chairs given by Mrs. Alice N. Lincoln for the aged women at Rainsford Island,” the Globe reported on March 28. The city council passed the buck, referring the rocking chair matter back to the Committee on Public Institutions.<sup>123</sup>*

The commissioners parried, producing some specious mathematics “proving” that not only were no more rocking chairs needed but that everything on Rainsford was in fine order: *“Permitted to carry out our plans,”* Commissioner Pillsbury told the *Globe*, *“I believe Boston will be second to none and in fact first among the cities of the country in its care of paupers and insane, both in appointments and conveniences.”<sup>124</sup>* But, confronted with headlines like *“Boston Paupers Not Allowed to Rock the Rocking Chairs”* and berated by the clergy, the mayor of Boston intervened,

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Crazed People burned to Death; Insane Asylum at the County Farm Burned to Ground,” *Dover Enquirer*, February 17, 1893, p. 1.

<sup>122</sup> *Boston Globe*, February 20, 1893, p. 5.

<sup>123</sup> *Boston Globe*, March 28, 1893, p. 9.

<sup>124</sup> *Boston Globe*, April 12, 1893, p. 9

ordering the commissioners to accept the rocking chairs as “a gratuity.”<sup>125</sup> This was finally done in mid-April, 1893.<sup>126</sup> Matters were hastily adjusted on the island as well.

When Boston reporters went out to have a look around Rainsford Island, the inmate numbers had abruptly dropped: “*There are now but 140 women in the institution and 21 men . . . . The attics are closed and the main brick building on the island is shut up.*”<sup>127</sup> The Rainsford Hospital patients had been transferred to Long Island Hospital, with the intention of renovating the hospital buildings. Only the pauper women were left on Rainsford.

It was the rocking-chair incident, we believe, that set Mrs. Lincoln on the path to war. In retrospect, the city no doubt wished it had ferried the chairs out to Rainsford when first asked.

### **Demanding a Hearing:**

In 1894, Lincoln at last found the means of airing the abuse, previously going on at Rainsford and continuing to go on at Long Island, to which the paupers had been transferred. With the young Louis D. Brandeis as her legal counsel, she set about making the City of Boston Board of Aldermen listen to the litany of complaints and criticisms that the Board of Visitors and the press had for years pointed out to the Commissioners of Public Institutions, and which the commissioners had done nothing to address.

It is not clear when Lincoln met Brandeis, but she is described by Brandeis’ biographer Melvin I. Urofsky as a “longtime friend” at the time of the hearings. Brandeis had been active with his alma mater, Harvard Law School, since graduating as valedictorian there in 1875; he may have met Mrs. Lincoln through her husband Roland Lincoln, who was also involved in Harvard affairs. Brandeis’ friend and law partner, Samuel Warren, Jr., would have traveled in the same social circles as the Lincolns. “*Brandeis never went looking for reform work;*” writes Urofsky, “*causes seemed to find him.*” In this case, Mrs. Lincoln invited him out to have a look at the pauper institution on Long Island: Brandeis later called his visit there “*the most depressing & distressful experience of his life and said that as he walked through the syphilitic ward, he had a ‘sense of uncleanness.*”<sup>128</sup> When Mrs. Lincoln asked him to represent her at hearings before the city, he agreed.

A series of fifty-eight hearings began in March 1894 and strung over nine months; they are transcribed for posterity in City of Boston Document 211. Brandeis elicited testimony from Mrs. Lincoln but also from former employees at Long and Rainsford Islands, who seemed eager to illuminate the greed, corruption, and incompetence of their bosses. Their aim, said Brandeis, was

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<sup>125</sup> Boston *Globe*, March 31, 1893, p. 2; Boston *Globe*, April 1, 1893, p. 1; see also Doc. 211 (1895), vol. 1, p. 122.

<sup>126</sup> Boston *Globe*, April 14, 1893, p. 5.

<sup>127</sup> Boston *Globe*, April 14, 1893, p. 4.

<sup>128</sup> Melvin I. Urofsky, *Louis D. Brandeis: A Life* (New York: Pantheon, 2009), pp. 89–90, n90 (p. 776). The quotation is from a letter to Felix Frankfurter, February 26, 1927.

*“to throw what light we can upon a very dark spot in Boston.”*<sup>129</sup> In her opening statement, Mrs. Lincoln recalled her long struggle to get a hearing: *“I appealed to the Commissioners, asking that the young should be separated from the old, the vicious [vice-ridden] from the good, the sick from the well. In other words, that the inmates of the Almshouses should be classified and occupied. Gentlemen, this was in 1889, and I have been asking the same things ever since.”*<sup>130</sup> Appendix 4.1 gives a complete list of Mrs. Lincoln’s complaints.

George McCaffrey, former deputy superintendent at Long Island, testified to institutional indifference, to employee drunkenness, self-dealing, and corruption. The superintendent at the time, Dr. Cogswell, McCaffrey testified, boasted that *“within six weeks of this time I propose to have this island so that it will run itself, and I will have nothing to do but sit here and draw my salary.”* Asked if Dr. Cogswell ever treated patients, McCaffrey replied, *“Never.”*<sup>131</sup> Dr. Cogswell lived well doing nothing, skimming milk and meat off the official allocation for personal use or resale, while patients including infants went without.

In addition to bad medical care, poor diet, and lax supervision of staff, patients lay in peril from fire. The Board of Visitors had notified the Commissioners that patients were warehoused in the attic of the old wooden hospital, where kerosene lamps and candles provided the only light at night.<sup>132</sup> The stairs to the lower floors were narrow, and no provision for fire escape had been made. Hoses that might be used to put out a fire were rotted. The island authorities had politely tolerated the visits of Mrs. Lincoln and her cohort, but it is evident they resented the intrusion into what had become both a sinecure and a patronage opportunity. The Commissioners, but especially Jenks, resented any criticism of the way in which they were running the public institutions. Charles J. Prescott, one of the commissioners, testified that the chairman of the board, Dr. Jenks, had turned on him after Mrs. Lincoln had pleaded the case for closing the Rainsford Island Hospital, saying, *“Mr. Prescott, have you got any more of your damned old-woman cranks to bring before me? If you have, you can trot them in now.”*<sup>133</sup> In response to the complaints by Mrs. Lincoln and Mr. Prescott, *“the board did nothing.”*<sup>134</sup>

Testimony piled up day after day, and the transcript, Document 211, had to be published in two thick volumes to contain it all. City officials grilled Lincoln on the stand, no doubt hoping that she would become discouraged and go away. “Mrs. Lincoln,” said one, *“do you think it is fair for you to make a comparison between these two institutions if you do not know how many are in one of the institutions?”* To which Lincoln replied: *“I think so.”*<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Doc. 211 (1895), vol. 1, p. 11.

<sup>130</sup> Doc. 211 (1895), vol. 1, p. 13.

<sup>131</sup> Doc. 211 (1895), vol. 1, p. 139.

<sup>132</sup> Doc. 211 (1895), vol. 2, p. 1724.

<sup>133</sup> Doc. 211 (1895), vol. 2, p. 1724.

<sup>134</sup> Doc. 211 (1895), vol. 2, p. 1725.

<sup>135</sup> Doc. 211 (1895), vol. 1, p. 80.

The point was not simply that Rainsford or Long Island or the Austin Farm was poorly run and seething with bedbugs: it was that the entire management structure was faulty, permitting graft and patronage to flourish while the poor were humiliated and neglected. It was this *system* that Mrs. Lincoln sought to overthrow.

Mrs. Lincoln won the day. At the end of 1894, Rainsford Island was closed as a hospital and pauper-storage facility. The City documents for 1894–95 report that “The pauper women are now being removed from Rainsford Island to Long Island, and when their removal is completed, it is intended to remodel the buildings for the reception of the inmates of the House of Reformation.”<sup>136</sup> One woman, with her allies, had succeeded in shutting down a place of infamy. Regrettably, another would open in its place.

The closure came too late for twenty-eight-year-old Mary A. Smith. Per the City of Boston’s Records of Deaths, on January 10<sup>th</sup>, 1895, she died at Rainsford Island. Mary, an unmarried domestic worker, was 28 years old when she died from phthisis. She is not buried on the island as her body was claimed.

Alice North Towne Lincoln rests, with her husband Roland Crocker Lincoln, in Lot 817, Snowdrop Path, at Mount Auburn Cemetery. In 1926, they died three weeks apart at their mansion, Stoneleigh, located on South Street, Forest Hills, Boston.

#### **Appendix 4.1. Alice N. Lincoln’s List of Complaints**

*“I myself have seen —*

- 1. That the protection against fire at both Long and Rainsford Islands is utterly inadequate, not even an alarm gong being furnished in any of the institutions.*
- 2. That when the water supply is stopped, as it has been many times during the past year, the condition of the plumbing in the hospital and institution on Long Island is indescribably filthy and unsanitary.*
- 3. That the standard of cleanliness in the hospital at Long Island in regard to bed linen, clothing, and floors is far below what it ought to be.*
- 4. That personal cleanliness in the care of hospital patients is not enforced.*
- 5. That the quality of the food is not what it should be for the sick, and that too little care is taken in the preparation of the food for the well.*

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<sup>136</sup> *Commissioners of Public Institutions of the City of Boston, For The Year Ending, January 31, 1895*, City Document No. 29, p. 21.

6. *That sufficient paid assistance is not employed in the hospital, and that the grade of nursing is not so high as in similar institutions in this and in other States, where less dependence is placed on help furnished by inmates.*

7. *That women and children are kept in an institution for men.*

8. *That there is no telephone connection between Long Island and the city of Boston.*

9. *That no attempt at classification is made.*

*From these facts I draw the following deductions:*

*First. That as the existing evils are largely those of mismanagement, an improvement could be made in the condition of Boston's paupers.*

*Second. That to bring about this desirable result and to fix the responsibility where it properly belongs, a radical change in the present method of administration of the public institutions is absolutely necessary.”<sup>137</sup>*

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<sup>137</sup> “Care and Management of the Public Institutions,” Documents of the City of Boston for the Year 1894, vol. 4 (Boston: Rockwell and Churchill, 1895), Document 211 (vol. 1), pp. 16–17.

## Prison Reform

After her hard-fought victory in her complaint against City of Boston's Selectmen, Mrs. Lincoln did not rest on her laurels. By April 1, 1895, she was on the offensive in the pursuit of prison reform, improved housing, and reforms at Long Island Hospital.

Governor Greenhalge chaired a meeting of prominent citizens at the home of Mrs. J. T. Spooner on Walnut Street, Boston. The Governor was there to advocate for the building of a House of Correction at South Boston and the State assuming control of the county prisons. Mayor Curtis was in attendance to advocate for a House of Reformation to be built there. The Mayor also spoke in favor of "dark cells" as a means of punishment.

Reverend Burns, of Charlestown, was opposed to the use of "dark cells" as he frequently visited the incarcerated. Mrs. Lincoln supported the State assuming control of the prisons.<sup>138</sup>

### **Other newspaper items:**

#### **December 1, 1895, Boston Globe:**

*Boston Globe - "Mrs. Alice N. Lincoln, and others, are to hold a meeting on December 5, 1895 to present their advocacy for separating the Department of Public Charities from the Department of Corrections. Two hundred and forty people have already signed a petition to be filed with the General Court."*<sup>139</sup>

#### **December 5, 1895, Boston Post:**

*Boston Post- "Mrs. Alice N. Lincoln calls a public meeting for December 5, to speak about the pauper and penal institutions and give her recent observations of those on Europe."*<sup>140</sup>  
Bishop Lawrence, Vicar General Byrne, Rev. Fr. Fields, Rev. William B. Frisby, Mr. and Mrs. Spooner, and Mrs. Alice N. Lincoln, appeared at a meeting at the home of Mrs. John A. Andrew to discuss the need of clergy and religious services being afforded to all inmates.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Boston Post, April 2, 1895, p. 8

<sup>139</sup> Boston Globe, December 1, 1895, p.5

<sup>140</sup> Boston Post, December 5, 1895, p. 5

<sup>141</sup> Boston Globe, December 5, 1895, p. 3

**March 27, 1896, Boston Globe:**

Boston Globe- *“Apropos of the excitement at the state house over the petition of Mrs. Alice N. Lincoln of Boston, who prays for the abolition of the present system of government of Boston’s charitable institutions, a report will soon be issued that will enable the legislative committee to work more intelligently on the subject.”*<sup>142</sup>

**August 3, 1897, Boston Globe:**

Boston Globe- *“Prison labor at Long Island has been discontinued. This is the result of Mrs. Alice N. Lincoln’s “famous sensational fight” against Dr. Jenks” (the same person she took on in the Rainsford Island hearings) “and had brought up during the hearings when she recommended the separation of prisoners and paupers.”*<sup>143</sup>

**October 31, 1898, Boston Globe:**

**“PRISON REFORM  
Viewed from Mr. Marshall’s Standpoint  
Commissioner Comments on Report Made  
By Mrs. Lincoln  
Absence of Work and Exercise  
Explained-Other Evils”**

*“Commissioner Marshall of the penal institutions department of this city comments interestingly on the report of Mrs. Alice N. Lincoln made to Governor Wolcott of the need of state control of all penal institutions in the state. Mr. Marshall recently returned from Europe, where he made a close inspection of the prison methods there and Mrs. Lincoln’s views interest him greatly.”*

He stated:

*“Mrs. Lincoln speaks of the great lack of uniformity of the standard of the various prisons, yet she does not call attention to what lack there is of uniformity in them, but after making this statement she says: “The most serious evils which I have encountered in the county prisons are the absence of out-door exercise and fresh air, so necessary to healthy human life: also the absence of work in seven prisons, and the fact that in three prisons of the state, women were found to be under the care of men only.”*

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<sup>142</sup> Boston Globe, March 27, 1896, p. 19

<sup>143</sup> Boston Globe, August 3, 1897, p. 6

*As these are stated to be the most serious evils in the conduct of the prisons, I think it my duty to comment on these things....*

*...The last of what Mrs. Lincoln calls the most serious evil in the three prisons, all of the women are under the care of men only, is very scandalous and I agree with her that it is a serious evil; but the statement of the fact is not a criticism on the present management of the prisons as they have no power to transfer women from these to other prisons in the state: but it is a criticism upon the board of commissioners, to whom it is desired that the care of these prisons shall be given...*

*...I desire to say also, in regard to the lack of exercise in the prisons of the state, that Mrs. Lincoln does call attention to the fact that there is no form of exercise introduced in any of the prisons that are now under the care of the state prison commissioners. Does she desire that exercise in the 11 prisons of the state shall be abolished? Or does she wish that the three prisons now under their control to receive the benefit of physical instruction now in the 11 prisons controlled by the counties?*

*I desire to say that before the appearance of Mrs. Lincoln's report to the governor I also called attention to the fact that the evils of which she speaks were those which could be remedied by the action of the prison commission, which fact she does not communicate to the governor in her report, and request him to direct the state board of prison commissioners to remedy them under the authority of the board possesses."<sup>144</sup>*

**November 1, 1898, Boston Globe:**

***“REPORT NOT ASKED FOR.***

***Mrs. Alice N. Lincoln's Findings on Penal Institutions Were Not Solicited by the Governor.”***

*“Inquiry at the state house shows that while Mrs. Alice N. Lincoln has undoubtedly furnished the governor with a report on the condition of the prisons in the commonwealth, it is a report entirely unsolicited and that his excellency never authorized Mrs. Lincoln to make any such report.”*

Early in June Mrs. Lincoln called on the governor and asked for a letter of introduction to the prison authorities. This, which would have been given to any person in good standing who presented equally good reasons, was granted. It reads as follows:

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<sup>144</sup> Boston Globe, October 31, 1898, p. 13

*“To the Wardens of the Penal Institutions of the Commonwealth and the Keepers of the County Jails:*

*Gentlemen-I beg to introduce to you and commend to your courteous consideration Mrs. Roland C. Lincoln, who is much interested in the institutions of our commonwealth. Roger Wolcott”<sup>145</sup>*

**February 21, 1899, Boston Globe:**

***“HEARING ON PRISONS.<sup>146</sup>  
Proposed to Put Penal Institutions Under One Head-  
Present System Denounced as Absurd”***

The following event was a classically designed Alice Lincoln response to the government’s treatment of her, as noted in the previous article- rallying the affluent and influential.

*“The legislative committee on prisons gave a hearing at the state house yesterday morning on the petition and bill providing that both state and county penal and correctional institutions shall hereafter be controlled by one body of trustees. The committee was crowded with interested spectators, including many men and women prominent in the community.”* Some of the attendees, supporting the bill, no doubt as a result of Mrs. Lincoln’s actions, were:

Moorfield Storey<sup>147</sup>, Mayor Josiah Quincy<sup>148</sup>, Rt. Rev. William Lawrence. D.D. Bishop of Massachusetts<sup>149</sup>, Henry Parkman, Attorney, Chairman of the Prison Commission, Dr. Charles F. Folsom, Prison Commission member, Joseph G. Throp, Secretary of the Prison Association, William H. Lincoln, Mrs. Lincoln’s brother-in-law and later to become President of the Boston Chamber of Commerce. Mrs. Alice Parker Lesser<sup>150</sup> Attorney, representing various women’s’ organizations (Massachusetts Federation of Women’s Clubs), Leader in the Suffrage Movement.

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<sup>145</sup> Boston Globe, November 1, 1898, p. 12

<sup>146</sup> Boston Globe, February 21, 1899, p. 6

<sup>147</sup> <https://www.harvardmagazine.com/2018/07/moorfield-storey#>

<sup>148</sup> <https://www.doaks.org/resources/bliss-tyler-correspondence/annotations/josiah-huntington-quincy>

<sup>149</sup> <https://www.thecrimson.com/article/1941/11/7/bishop-lawrence-famous-churchman-is-dead/>

<sup>150</sup>

<https://books.google.com/books?id=SGQuAAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA372&lpg=PA372&dq=Alice+Parker+Lesser&source=bl&ots=Kwao32joy2&sig=ACfU3U1rnavs8yuz35TLI3AsYUEQ7ZgtmA&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjj-pOroZnqAhXumuAKHbWOC0gQ6AEwBXoECBEQAQ#v=onepage&q=Alice%20Parker%20Lesser&f=false>

March 20, 1899, Boston Globe:

**“GLOBE EXTRA  
5 O’CLOCK  
ENOUGH NOW  
Of Prisons, of Cells and of Wardens  
What You Want is to Use Them,  
Says Morefield[sic] Story[sic]”.**<sup>151</sup>

***Closing Arguments Before Legislative Committee as to State Control of Penal Institutions-Seven Reasons Given by Mrs. Alice N. Lincoln Why Proposed Change Would be Beneficial-Comparative Figures on Cost of Maintenance Discussed by J. G. Throp.”***

Almost a year later, January 24, 1900, the Massachusetts Prison Reform League had been founded and began to have meetings.<sup>152</sup>

February 10, 1900, Boston Globe:

**“GLOBE EXTRA  
3 O’CLOCK  
URGING STATE CONTROL  
OF ALL MASSACHSUSSETTS JAILS  
AND HOUSES OF CORRECTION  
Mrs. Alice N. Lincoln and Henry Parkman  
Before Legislative Commission-  
Measure Advocated in Name of Progress Along Many  
Lines- Evils That Need to Be Corrected”**<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Boston Globe, March 20, 1899, p. 22

<sup>152</sup> Boston Post, January 24, 1900, P. 8

<sup>153</sup> Boston Globe, February 10, 1900, p. 26

**March 2, 1900, Boston Globe:**

***STATE CONTROL OF JAILS***  
***Mrs. Alice N. Lincoln Gives in Detail the***  
***Amount of Exercise Enjoyed by Prisoners.***<sup>154</sup>

On March 1, 1900, Mrs. Lincoln appeared before the committee. No other names were mentioned. She presented the facts and figures for each County Jail.

Her efforts, having failed, Mrs. Lincoln twice attempted to halt the commitment of people with Delirium Tremens being sent to Deer Island. She presented physicians who noted that alcoholism is an illness, not a crime. That effort also failed.<sup>155</sup>

Mrs. Lincoln did join the Prison Reform League, as a member, not an officer.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Boston Globe, March 2, 1900, p 23.

<sup>155</sup> Boston Globe, January 23, 1901, p. 12 & February 13, 1901, p. 14

<sup>156</sup> Boston Post March 28, 1905, p. 10

## Tenement Reform

Contemporaneous with her prison reform work, Mrs. Lincoln re-engaged her efforts in tenement reform. She was still a member of the Boston Cooperative Building Company, yet, on her own, began other projects. She lent her plans for model tenements to an exhibition at Mechanics' Hall.<sup>157</sup>

*“From the excellent communication sent by her this week to the daily papers, we are pleased to notice that Mrs. Alice N. Lincoln, undeterred by the unworthy treatment accorded her by certain officials, is keeping up her good work in behalf of the inmates of Boston’s public institutions. Mrs. Lincoln’s effort in this direction is deserving of the support and co-operation of the whole community, and there is no question at all that the abuses for whose correction she asks really exist, and should be remedied.”*<sup>158</sup>

### **Transfer of Property:**

I am unaware of the circumstances of this exchange.

*“Alice N. Lincoln purchased property at Phillips Street and Primus Avenue from Fanny Clark for \$1.”*<sup>159</sup> (Beacon Hill)

*Alice N. Lincoln sold the property at Phillips Street and Primus Avenue for \$1. To Simon Mazur.*<sup>160</sup>

*Simon Mazur sold the property at Phillips Street and Primus Avenue to Max Bratkoysky for \$1.*<sup>161</sup>”

On February 26, 1896, Mrs. Lincoln addressed a large group at the Prospect Union, Cambridge, on “Better Homes for Working People.”<sup>162</sup>

*“The proposition to purchase a North end playground has enlisted the sympathy and support of women throughout the city, and especially of those who have been interested in practical philanthropic work in that or any of the other crowded sections of the city, and who know the needs of the children and the hardships they suffer for want of suitable places for recreation.*

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<sup>157</sup> Boston Post, May 5, 1895, p. 12

<sup>158</sup> Sacred Heart Review, August 15, 1895, p. 5

<sup>159</sup> Boston Globe, February 8, 1896, p. 13

<sup>160</sup> Boston Globe, June 25, 1899, p. 16

<sup>161</sup> *ibid*

<sup>162</sup> Boston Globe, February 27, 1896 p. 10

*The head and front of the women's movement in favor of the playground has been Mrs. Alice N. Lincoln, who has known the North end thoroughly for the past 16 years and has witnessed its changes and growing needs."*

Said Mrs. Lincoln to a Globe reporter:

*"We women were eager to do everything in our power to bring about a favorable vote on the playground question. The men to whom we talked told us to bring out the public sentiment in favor of it, and that is why we went to the council meeting. I did not know much about the council, its membership or mode of procedure, but I thought it was very fair the other night, and I was especially pleased to hear some of the men from remote districts show such a generous and magnanimous spirit in regard to the North end.*

*We did feel relieved when it was over and we found that the measure had passed. Then we began to worry for fear that the aldermen would kill it. But several of the councilmen to whom I spoke that evening were quite reassuring in their opinions as to its ultimate success.*

*Personally, I have seen so many evidences of the necessity for such a provision for the North end children, just to mention one instance to which I might add to many others, of the unhappy accidents that result from the present inadequate accommodations for children. One of the hundreds of small boys who has no place to play went onto a flat roof to play ball and, venturing to the near edge, fell off and was killed. His mother, who had been in delicate health, lost her reason in consequence of the shock, the home was broken up, and more ill consequences resulted than I care to name—all because no one cares enough for these people to prevent such things..."<sup>163</sup>*

Mrs. Lincoln was aided in this cause by her friends: Mrs. Dewey, Mrs. C. F. Folsom, Miss Lucia T. Ames, Mrs. Margaret Deland, and others.

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<sup>163</sup> Boston Globe, February 29, 1896, p. 13

# LONG ISLAND HOSPITAL:

## “DR. HEATH AND MRS. LINCOLN”

*“Dr. Heath, head of public institutions department, anent his refusal to give Mrs. Alice N. Lincoln a pass a few days ago to Long Island, yesterday said:*

*I refused to give her a pass as I considered it for the best interest of discipline of the institution that she should not visit it.*

*As Mrs. Lincoln tells the story she says that when she first applied for a pass to visit “her friends, who were chronic invalids,” she was given a pass by Herbert Pope, secretary to the board, Dr. Heath being out of the office at the time. The commissioner, however, when he learned that a pass had been issued, countermanded it, Mr. Pope writing to Mrs. Lincoln, and the latter, returned the pass.*

*Mrs. Lincoln says that while she was sitting in DR. Heath’s office when she came up to Boston to see him about the matter, and was told what she could not have a pass, she noticed that the clerk signed a permit for another lady present who wished to visit a sick friend at the island. Dr. Heath’s terse explanation yesterday, as above quoted, makes clear the reason for the discrimination.”<sup>164</sup>*

Mrs. Lincoln’s name was raised by Mayoral candidate Josiah Quincy, “I am opposed to him (incumbent Mayor Curtis) because Dr. Heath, in his presence, refused to grant a permit for Mrs. Alice N. Lincoln to visit two elderly friends at Long Island. I am opposed to him because he stultified himself, in refusing to grant this lady’s request, endeavoring thereby to punish her for the course she took in opposition to his election last fall...”<sup>165</sup>

*“Today speculation is rife at city hall as to the personnel of these boards.*

*It is generally supposed about the hall that conspicuous amongst the women on these boards (presumably on the board for the care and the management of the paupers) will be Mrs. Alice N. Lincoln, who is so well known for her connection with the public institutions and, who, under the Matthews administration was chief among those who overthrew the control of Dr. Jenks.”<sup>166</sup>*

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<sup>164</sup> Boston Post, August 10, 1895, p. 8

<sup>165</sup> Boston Post, December 8, 1895, p. 4

<sup>166</sup> Boston Globe, June 9, 1897, p. 15

The seven trustees, Mrs. Lincoln, being one, of the Boston pauper department selected Alvin T. Hart, of Indiana as the new superintendent of Pauper Institutions.<sup>167</sup>

Mr. Hart declined the offer to be the new superintendent of Pauper Institutions citing poor monetary compensation.<sup>168</sup>

In a letter to the Editor, Mrs. Alice N. Lincoln objected to the appointment of Arthur T. Hopkins as superintendent of Long Island institutions as he resides in Somerville, and not in Boston as required.<sup>169</sup>

Of the yearly admissions at the Long Island institution, 79% of the men and 36.6% of the women are recorded as intemperates.<sup>170</sup>

As the new century approached, Mrs. Lincoln was appointed Chairman [sic] of the Board of Pauper Institutions.<sup>171</sup>

After Mayor Josiah Quincy did not run for re-election, Thomas Norton Hart (b. January 20, 1829- d. October 4, 1927) was sworn in as Mayor on July 1, 1900. By February 25, 1900, he had discharged five hundred employees. The final total was projected to be two thousand.<sup>172</sup>

**Boston Globe on February 25, 1900:**

**“Office-Changing Novelty”**

*“The term of Mrs. Alice N. Lincoln as a member of the board of trustees for paupers has been extended by a voluntary exchange of terms between herself and another board member of the board. This is something novel in city hall experiences, and it caused a surprise to Mayor Hart, who has just become cognizant of the facts.*

*Mrs. Lincoln’s term, as originally arranged would have expired on April 30, 1901, but by exchanging with another member of the board, which was done with Mayor Quincy’s approval just before he retired, her term runs to April 30, 1902, which carries her over the period that Mayor Hart will be out of office.*

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<sup>167</sup> Boston Globe, February 22, p.1

<sup>168</sup> Boston Globe, March 14, 1899, p. 19

<sup>169</sup> Boston Globe, May 8, p. 19

<sup>170</sup> Boston Globe, August 25, 1899, p. 14

<sup>171</sup> Boston Globe, December 5, 1899, p. 10

<sup>172</sup> Boston Globe, February 25, 1900, p. 16

*This curious state of affairs was brought about by Mrs. Lincoln and one of the other members of the board resigning their positions. Mayor Quincy reappointed them, giving Mrs. Lincoln the long term. On December 27, Mayor Quincy received a letter from the member from whom Mrs. Lincoln exchanged terms in which it was stated that because of the uncertainty of his ability to give the time to the position he would prefer to have the appointment for the term ending April 30, 1901.”*

Mayor Quincy communicated with Mrs. Lincoln and she resigned, after which she was appointed to the office the term which expired April 30, 1902.

*“Mrs. Lincoln, is now chairman of the board of pauper institutions trustees. There is opposition to her holding a place on the board, as she is not a legal resident of Boston, her home and that of her husband being at Manchester, Mass.”<sup>173</sup>*

Mrs. Lincoln was a Boston Resident. Her husband resided in Manchester, MA.

As a Chairman of the Pauper Institutions Trustees, Mrs. Lincoln posted a solicitation of proposal for the building of a hospital and nurses’ home at Long Island.<sup>174</sup>

The new mayor, General Patrick A. Collins, reappointed Mrs. Lincoln as the Chairperson of the Pauper Institutions Department for a term of five years.<sup>175</sup>

One Hundred and sixty prominent men and women attended the graduation of eight nurses at the Long Island Hospital. There were two hundred-thirty patients there, as well as four hundred inmates in the Almshouse.<sup>176</sup>

The Pauper Institution Trustees requested \$120,000 to expand the buildings at Long Island Hospital, as well as the purchase of tents to house tuberculosis patients during the summer.<sup>177</sup>

Mrs. Alice N. Lincoln dedicated the new hospital wing for forty-one tuberculosis patients. It cost \$40,000.<sup>178</sup>

*“Mrs. Lincoln attends a meeting at Faneuil Hall that advocated for all nurses to be registered. A bill has been crafted making registration compulsory for practicing nurses.”<sup>179</sup>*

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<sup>173</sup> Boston Globe, February 25, 1900 p. 16

<sup>174</sup> Boston Globe, April 29, 1901, p. 12

<sup>175</sup> Boston Globe, April 29, 1902, p. 19

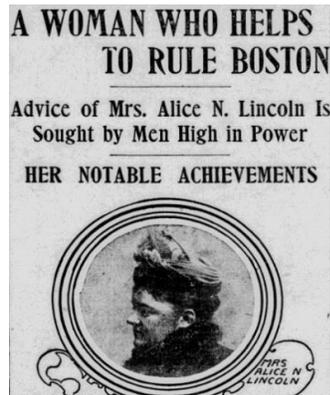
<sup>176</sup> Boston Globe, June 13, 1902, p. 8

<sup>177</sup> Boston Post, June 26, 1902, p. 2

<sup>178</sup> Boston Globe, November 13, 1902, p. 22

<sup>179</sup> Boston Post, February 27, 1903, p. 2

## The Tipping Point of Mrs. Lincoln's Influence:



**Author's note:** Mrs. Lincoln made numerous enemies during her many years attempting to help the disadvantaged. She never took no for an answer. She was effective, and on a moment's notice, could rally Boston's affluent and influential to her causes.

She was an intelligent and articulate writer, as well as a commanding orator. That enabled her to reach and move the public.

Now, as the Chairman of the Board of Pauper Institutions she occupied seat at the table. Mrs. Lincoln was a part of the government and became an object of blame from the establishment.

I believe that the article's caption, "**HELPS RULE BOSTON**" "*Advice of Mrs. Alice N. Lincoln Is Sought by Men High in Power*" triggered a bureaucratic backlash.

As noted earlier in this book, pages 48-52, the following took place in 1894, during the 58 days of hearings relative to her complaint regarding the conditions at Rainsford and Long Islands:

*"The island authorities had politely tolerated her visits of Mrs. Lincoln and her cohort, but it is evident they resented the intrusion into what had become both a sinecure and a patronage opportunity. The Commissioners, but especially Jenks, resented any criticism of the way in which they were running the public institutions..."*

*"...Charles J. Prescott, one of the commissioners, testified that the chairman of the board, Dr. Jenks, had turned on him after Mrs. Lincoln had pleaded the case for closing the Rainsford Island Hospital, saying, "Mr. Prescott, have you got any more of*

*your damned old-woman cranks to bring before me? If you have, you can trot them in now.*<sup>180</sup>

In response to the complaints by Mrs. Lincoln and Mr. Prescott, “the board did nothing.”<sup>181</sup>

I doubt if attitudes had changed since that event, and there were many scores to be evened by her many enemies.

**Events Following the Boston Post Article - Please note the increased pace and intensity of the articles. The blood was in the water.**

Four patients at Long Island Hospital were poisoned by strychnine, two died. The Board of Trustees investigated and all but one found the cause to be a mistake by the druggist. He was discharged.<sup>182</sup>

The Board of Aldermen intended to investigate the poisoning deaths at Long Island Hospital. The dissenting party in the Trustees report is pushing the issue.<sup>183</sup>

Mrs. Lincoln will present the poisoning matter to Mayor Collins when he returns from vacation. Various members of the Boston government reported *“they are anxious for a ventilation of the past administration of the Almshouse”*<sup>184</sup>

*“Mrs. Alice N. Lincoln, the chairman of the board of trustees of pauper institutions has been “up against it” so to speak, during the Long Island investigation. Mr. Dobbins’ charges have mainly been directed against her, as the head of the board, and she has been on the defensive ever since the investigation started, and her cross-examination of Dobbins’ witnesses was considered to be very finished. She has enjoyed the reputation of being a very clever woman, so far has demonstrated that she is a woman of remarkable and varied attainments.”*<sup>185</sup>

Mrs. Lincoln responded to allegation that her books are not in order. She enumerated her defense in great detail.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Doc. 211 (1895), vol. 2, p. 1724.

<sup>181</sup> Doc. 211 (1895), vol. 2, p. 1725

<sup>182</sup> Boston Globe, May 29, 1903, p. 11

<sup>183</sup> Boston Post, May 30, p. 6

<sup>184</sup> Boston Post, June 2, 1903, p. 12

<sup>185</sup> Boston Post, July 23, 1903, p. 6

<sup>186</sup> Boston Globe, August 7, 1903, p. 17

Mrs. Lincoln denied that an inmate at Long Island was allowed to escape by stealing a workman's boat.<sup>187</sup>

Mrs. Lincoln's records and book are in order.<sup>188</sup>

Representative Patrick Shiels filed a bill to abolish the Pauper Institutions Board.<sup>189</sup>

Dr. Charles H. Cogswell, former superintendent of the Long Island Almshouse, was arrested for embezzlement of \$3,750. He had worked under Dr. Thomas L. Jenks, who with Cogswell were subjects in the 1894 hearings which resulted from Mrs. Lincoln's complaint to the Board of Aldermen. The following testimony was presented in those hearings:

*“George McCaffrey, former deputy superintendent at Long Island, testified to institutional indifference, to employee drunkenness, self-dealing, and corruption. The superintendent at the time, Dr. Cogswell, McCaffrey testified, boasted that “within six weeks of this time I propose to have this island so that it will run itself, and I will have nothing to do but sit here and draw my salary.” Asked if Dr. Cogswell ever treated patients, McCaffrey replied, “Never.”<sup>190</sup> Dr. Cogswell lived well doing nothing, skimming milk and meat off the official allocation for personal use or resale, while patients including infants went without.”<sup>191</sup>*

### **MRS. LINCOLN'S RESIGNATION**

*“Considered it an Honor and a Privilege to Serve City.*

*Her Interest in Institutions Will Continue.”*

*“After the final session of the pauper institution trustees this noon the chairman of the board, Mrs. Alice N. Lincoln, was asked for a statement on her position.*

*She positively declined to make any statement about how she took the action of the mayor, and said all that she did care to say would be furnished the newspapers by her stenographer. This statement, it was later found, was merely a copy of her resignation, which follows:*

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<sup>187</sup> Boston Globe, August 16, 1903, p. 28

<sup>188</sup> Boston Globe, August 20, 1903, p. 7

<sup>189</sup> Boston Globe, February 3, 1904, p. 21

<sup>190</sup> Doc. 211 (1895), vol. 1, p. 139.

<sup>191</sup> Doc. 211 (1895), vol. 2, p. 1725.

***“Boston, March 11, 1904***

***Hon. Patrick A. Collins, Mayor of Boston:***

*Dear Sir-I wish to place in your hands my resignation as a trustee of the pauper institutions of Boston, with the request that the same may take effect on April 30, next or earlier, if it seems to you desirable.*

*I consider it an honor and a privilege to serve the city during the past seven years, and my interest in the work in the institutions, and especially in the Long Island hospital, will continue although I cease to be actively connected with them.*

*Respectfully, Alice N. Lincoln.”*<sup>192</sup>

*“Mayor Collins yesterday employed radical measures yesterday to end the dissension and dispute among the trustees of the pauper institutions. Summoning the seven members of the board to his office, he requested the resignations of all, to effect immediately. All except Dr. William H. Grainger complied, and the mayor promptly removed the member who would not resign.*

*Mrs. Alice N. Lincoln, the chairman, had been forewarned. She went to the mayor’s office with her formal resignation in her handbag. She tendered the paper as soon as Mayor Collins finished his statement to the board....”*

*“The mayor then placed Hon. John B. Martin, **commissioner of penal institutions**, in charge of the almshouse at Long Island and the city almshouse at Charlestown...”*<sup>193</sup>

The Mayor noted he was putting an end to the strife on the board. Actually, only one member was not in agreement with the other six. The Mayor also fired him.

On, or about, April 8, 1904, Commissioner Martin, ordered “Farmer” Bryant, to leave Long Island. He had testified on behalf of the previous Trustees at a hearing during the recent investigation.<sup>194</sup>

Not to be deterred, Mrs. Lincoln filed a bill in 1905, on behalf of consumptives:

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<sup>192</sup> Boston Globe, March 11, 1904, p. 9

<sup>193</sup> Boston Globe, March 12, 1904, p. 1

<sup>194</sup> Boston Post, April 10, 1904, p. 7

*“The movement in this city in favor of a hospital for consumptives is an excellent one. The need of such an institution is great. Mrs. Alice N. Lincoln quoted figures at the hearing at City Hall last week, showing that there were more than 2,100 cases of this disease reported in Boston last year, and 1,227 deaths. By far the greater number were probably outside of any institution, and therefore in a position to endanger lives. We hope Mrs. Lincoln and her associate will be successful in awaking interest among our City Fathers in this most important matter. A city which has money to spend in so many ways as Boston—a city which, for instance, can spend thousands of dollars every year to pay hack-rides for its aldermen—ought not be backward about providing a hospital for its unfortunate consumptives.”*<sup>195</sup>

After the March 25, 1905, Sacred Heart Review, I found only two articles of consequence in the newspaper. Both were in 1908. One was her objection to Mayor Hibbard’s bill to be able to name a *Czar* who would have the power to “wipe out” all departments whether or not created by statute.<sup>196</sup>

The other was to speak before the committee of public charitable institutions as to “*the cruel, almost barbarous system of caring for the insane*”.<sup>197</sup>

Mrs. Lincoln’s obituary, in March 1926, noted that she had been an invalid for the past 15 years<sup>198</sup>. No doubt her decades of advocating for the poor had a negative impact on her health.

As noted in the Preface, I am a better person for having learned about Alice North Towne Lincoln

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<sup>195</sup> Sacred Heart Review, March 25, 1905, p. 5

<sup>196</sup> Boston Post April 28, 1908, p. 2

<sup>197</sup> Boston Post, May 26, 1908, p. 5

<sup>198</sup> Boston Post, March 18, 1926

